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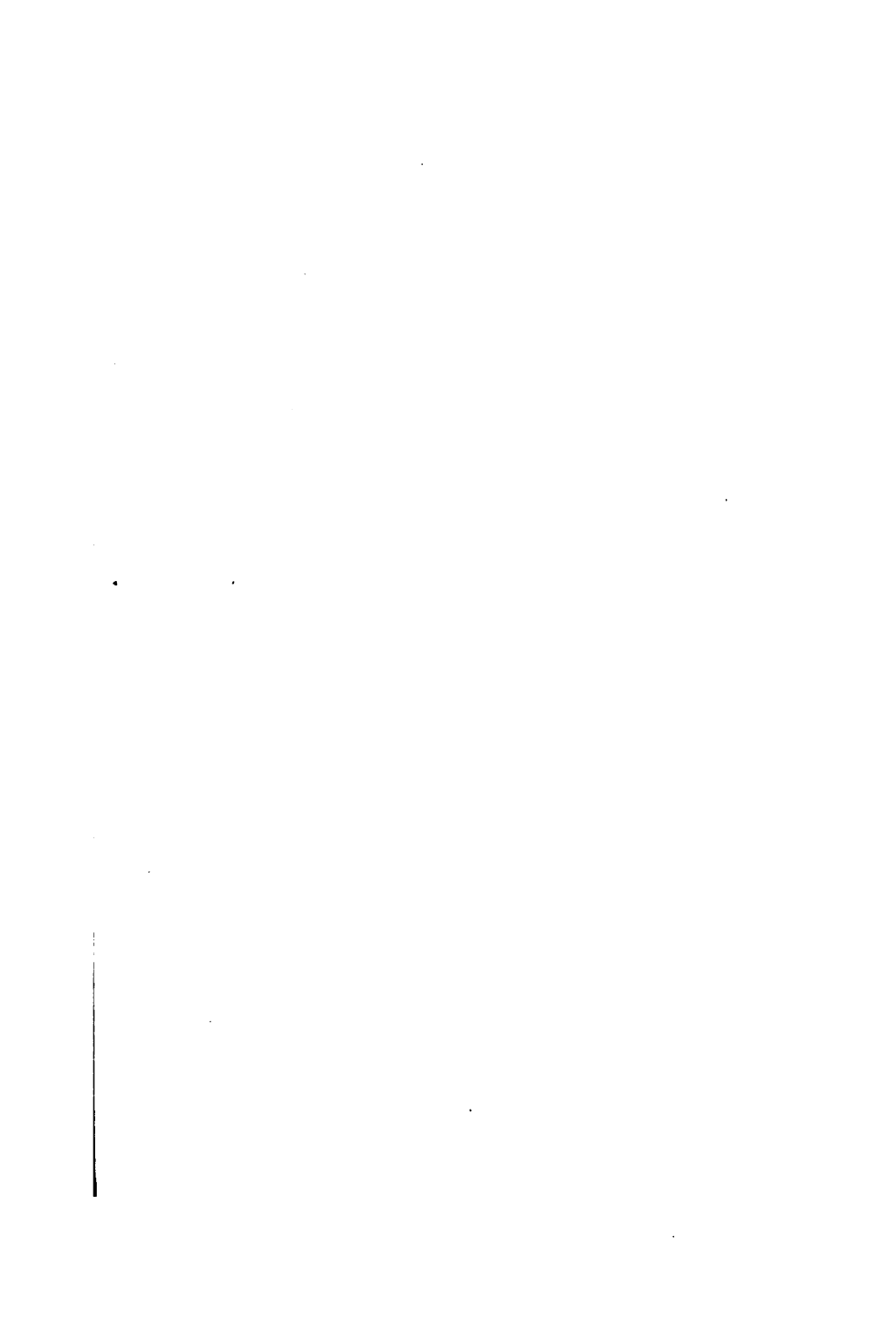


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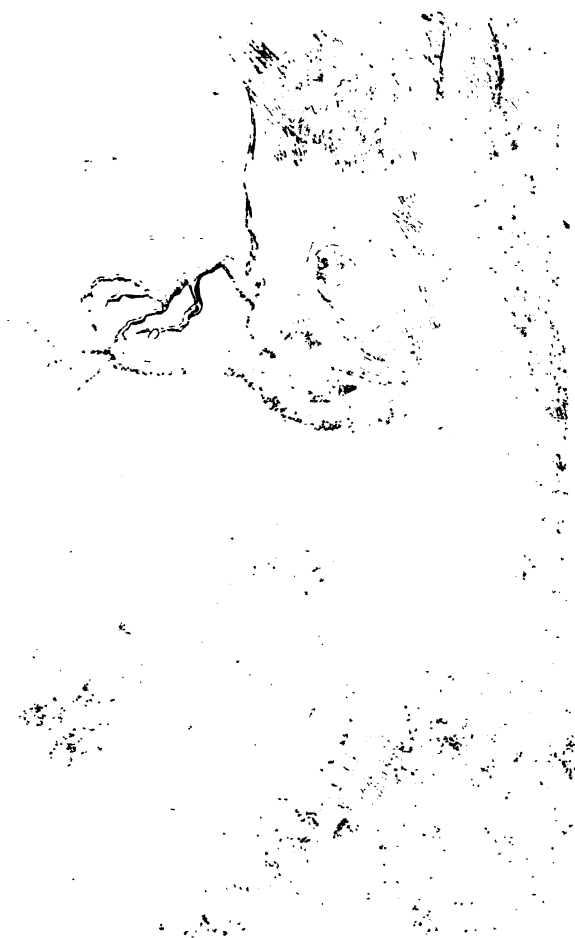
LORELEY.

MORE BOOKS.

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MORE STORIES.

BY

JULIA GODDARD,

AUTHOR OF "KARL AND THE SIX LITTLE DWARFS."

LONDON :

ARTHUR HALL, SMART, AND ALLEN,

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MORE STORIES.

INTRODUCTION.

THE wind howled through the forest, and shook the tall tree tops, and rocked the little birds in their nests; but it was too rude a lullaby to send them to sleep, and they were glad enough when the Wind-Spirit grew weary, and paused for awhile to take some rest.

The snow was lying deep upon the ground, and the foxes shivered if they even put their noses out of their holes, so that the hares and rabbits might have had a fine time of it had they not also been half frozen; and when they ventured abroad it was but to find themselves obliged to shelter in cunning little snow tents, with just a breathing-hole at the top: therefore, for all the pleasure they were likely to have, they might as well have stayed at home.

As for the squirrels that leaped from branch to branch so merrily in the summer, they had curled their warm tails round them, and shut their great

flashing brown eyes, and very sensibly gone to sleep. Possibly they were dreaming of heaps of shining nuts and acorns; perhaps also of pieces of gingerbread, if any of them were old enough to remember little Karl and the tempting bait she used to lay for them. However, I do not know whether squirrels have good memories.

But little Karl is a king now, and he has not been in the forest for many a day. It does not seem long to him since he was there, for the days go by so pleasantly, and he has with him the little playfellow that Hans promised him years ago. She, too, has changed; she is now a beautiful queen, as good as she is beautiful, and Karl loves her more and more every day.

And Karl and Lilien talk of paying a visit, sometime, to the old forest where they were so happy with their good little friends. They will find no change in the cave, neither in the six little dwarfs, Hans, Kaspar, Fritz, Klapps, Schnapps, and Peter.

Hans and his brothers do not mind the frost and snow, and little do they care whether the Wind-Spirit rages or not; the two great fires are blazing steadily as ever, and through some wonderful invention of Peter's, their chimneys never smoke. It would be a good thing if we knew his secret.

I rather think Fritz is not sorry when winter sets in, for he becomes acquainted with many shy birds and animals, which in summer-time will not approach within speaking distance; and we may be sure that he makes good use of his magic tube. Indeed, it is quite surprising how wise the birds and beasts in

the forest are growing,—there is quite a march of intellect amongst them; for it is improving to mix with strangers, especially when they are as sensible as Fritz and his brothers.

Schnapps' spectacles have older glasses in them than formerly; but whether this is owing to his eyesight failing, or to his needing stronger sight to execute the elaborate piece of work upon which he is engaged, I cannot say. He has not touched the spinning-wheel for months, for all his time has been taken up in embroidering a velvet cover for the casket which is to contain the manuscript upon which Klapps has been employed.

This manuscript has cost the indefatigable Klapps much anxious care and labour; but it looks so beautiful now that it is completed, that he does not regret the pains he has bestowed upon it. All the large letters are painted in bright colours, and some of the pages have gold borders, with here and there a fanciful picture; for Klapps is somewhat of an artist.

Very few horseshoes have been made of late, for there has been more delicate work to do; golden clasps, and golden hinges, and golden ornaments, have been wanting for the carved ivory casket, wherein Klapps' manuscript will be placed. Upon the lid of the casket there is a group of forget-me-nots, whose flowers and leaves are wrought in turquoises and emeralds. Who would have thought the little dwarfs were so sentimental? But they had kind, gentle hearts, in spite of their rough exterior.

It was a pretty enough device, but certainly not needed to make Karl and Lilien remember their

friends. I dare say they admired it exceedingly, but I am sure they thought far more of the inside than of the outside of the casket. Ivory, and gold, and precious stones they were accustomed to see every day; but seldom did they meet with any one who could write upon parchment so beautifully as Klapps, or had such marvellous adventures and stories to relate.

At the precise moment of which I am telling you Klapps had laid down his pencil, he had folded his arms, and bent his head a little on one side, and was taking a critical survey of the word "Finis," or whatever word signifies "Finis" in the language of the dwarfs. The letters were blue and gold, and there was a handsome scroll underneath them.

"Finished at last!" exclaimed Klapps.

"How beautiful!" said the five other dwarfs in a chorus.

They had jumped up at Klapps' exclamation, and now Kaspar was looking over one shoulder, Hans over the other, whilst Peter managed to peep over Klapps' head, and Schnapps and Fritz bent down in front, so as to obtain a better view of the manuscript. They were happy faces that the ruddy firelight shone upon as the flames leaped higher and higher, as though they would fain give as much light upon the subject as possible.

"I don't think I could improve upon it," said Klapps.

"Impossible!" said the chorus.

"Whether will Lilien like it?" demanded Klapps.

"She will! she must!" answered the chorus.

It was a very pleasant chorus, for it always chimed in so harmoniously with the principal speaker.

Klapps was much encouraged, and even felt quite as much vanity as was allowable for so good a little dwarf to feel—perhaps a little more, but then it was very excusable.

“I may have made some slight mistakes,” began Klapps.

“No! no!” stoutly interrupted the chorus.

“One never can be quite certain,” continued Klapps, “and therefore I think it will be safer for me to read it aloud to you, and then you will be able to make your own emendations.”

You see Klapps was already beginning to feel his importance as an editor, and to assume technical language.

“A capital idea, capital! we will begin to-night.”

High they pile up the logs in the wide fireplace, for the night is cold, and outside the snow is lying deep as ever it did on Soracte; but who thinks of cold within? The Snow-sprites did peep down the chimney, but the crackling noises they heard frightened them, and the light and the sparks so dazzled them that they were almost blinded, and had much ado to find their way out into the keen night air again.

And round the cheerful blaze clustered the little brothers. Hans, Peter, and Schnapps were ensconced in the chimney-corner on one side, whilst Kaspar and Fritz ranged themselves on the other. Two hares, that Fritz had brought in half-starved the day before, attracted by the genial warmth, came from

the mossy bed that had been made for them, and frolicked on the hearth. A row of rescued birds were roosting overhead, and at Fritz's feet lay a shaggy dog, almost as large as himself—a very remarkable dog, not handsome, but of expressive countenance, having a row of white teeth, which he displayed now and then, Fritz said, when he smiled, at which the other brothers demurred. I, however, am inclined to think that Griff did smile; nay, that he occasionally laughed, for Griff was a humorous dog and a shrewd observer. But then only Fritz could find out that, for he was the only one who was able to use the wonderful tube. So the other brothers had to believe in Griff's marvellous sagacity second-hand, and I fear they were sometimes slightly sceptical.

When all were settled, and had assumed an attentive attitude, Klapps, who had been leaning back in his easy-chair, with one hand resting on the book-stand, sat upright, glanced round to see that all were ready, gave a prefatory hem! and read, in a somewhat important tone, the dedication:—

“To King Karl and his beautiful Queen these narrations and adventures of their friends, written out by the dwarf Klapps, are inscribed.”

CHAPTER I.

HANS' STORY.

Coreley.

As I, Hans, was proceeding on my journey, I came in sight of a mighty forest, which at first I was half tempted to avoid, as its outskirts, thickly grown with brushwood, long grass, and tall tangled weeds, did not give much promise of an easy thoroughfare. But on my nearer approach I perceived a narrow path, which had the appearance of being well worn by the footsteps of travellers, and my ear was struck by the gentle plashing of water in the distance. I cannot tell you the effect the singularly sweet sound produced; it seemed to lure me on—an intolerable thirst seized on me—I longed for water, water! Not only must I quaff the liquid crystal, but I must lave my burning brow and weary limbs in its cooling flood.

Involuntarily I turned into the narrow path, which grew darker and darker as I advanced, for the branches of the trees were closely interlaced, and their tops were high above me. I had not, however, gone far before I perceived that the darkness, instead

of increasing, was gradually diminishing, and before long I came to an open patch of ground, carpeted with soft mossy turf; the trunks of the trees that encircled it were twined with honeysuckle in full flower, whilst in the midst a fountain, formed of one silvery column of spray, rose high in the air, and fell in a pearly shower upon the glassy surface of a small sheet of water.

I was about to kneel down and place my lips to its brink, when suddenly the sweet enticing melody that had so fascinated me changed to a plaintive lament, and I looked up. The fountain had vanished, and in its place I saw a fair maiden, bound with silver cords to a sharp rock that rose out of the water. The tears were streaming from her blue eyes, and her hair fell in waves of gold down to her feet. A golden comb lay by her side, but just out of her reach, and so pale was she that she seemed like a marble statue, for her skin was white as the loose robe that fell in negligent folds around her.

I gazed upon the fair vision in amazement, but she did not speak or move, though the tears continued to flow faster and faster, and she moaned as one in pain. I rubbed my eyes, thinking I was dreaming, but no rubbing removed the weeping maiden from my sight. That she was watching me was obvious; and when I turned as if to go away, her face assumed such an imploring look that I could not help exclaiming—

“Fair maiden! how can I help you?”

I expected no answer, being firmly convinced that the scene before me was but an optical delusion. To my surprise she replied—

"Kind stranger, I pray you set me free from these cruel cords."

"Willingly," returned I, "if the water were not so deep, and I could swim."

She sighed—"Alas! alas! must I still linger here?"

I could not bear to see her distress, and, casting my eyes upon the ground, observed a young fir tree that appeared to have been just cut down. "Now," thought I, "if this fir be only long enough to make a bridge, and strong enough to bear me, I can creep along it and set the lady free. I wish she had a handsomer knight to do her a service." So I took hold of the end nearest to me, but had no sooner done so than I fell back, feeling as if I had received a severe blow, and at the same time a gruff voice exclaimed—

"What business have you meddling with my property?"

I could not imagine who the speaker could be, for I saw nothing but trees around me. I looked attentively, and now the trunk of an oak opposite seemed to assume a human form; the branches turned into enormous arms, and I no longer wondered whence came the blow I had received. What was I to do?

"He can do you no harm," said the weeping maiden; "advance towards him with your knife and you will see him retreat, for he is a coward and fears being wounded."

I cannot say that I felt certain of victory. However, there was no help for it; either I must make an ignoble retreat and leave the lady to her fate, or

I must try the effect of a bold attack. I decided upon the latter, and with a determined face, but I must confess a doubtful heart, I turned towards my adversary, and rushed upon him with my eyes closed and my knife extended ready to plunge into his breast. I am no coward, as you well know, but the certain danger which I supposed myself to be encountering was so frightful that I preferred not looking upon it. A violent shock caused me to open my eyes, and I found that I had run my knife up to the hilt in the trunk of the old oak. All traces of the hideous monster had vanished.

Elated by my victory I again seized the fir tree, dragged it to the edge of the lake, and threw it across to the rock as gently as I could, so as not to injure the chained fair one; then cautiously creeping along on my hands and knees, I managed with some difficulty to reach the rock. But I had left my knife buried in the tough old oak, and I had nothing wherewith to cut the cords.

"I must go back," said I.

"Quick, quick, then!" said the lady; "the cords are drawing tighter and tighter round me!"

It was too true; already the cruel bonds had marked a crimson circlet on her delicate wrist, and I expected to see the purple blood gush forth. Therefore I lost no time, but scrambled back, tore my knife from the tree, which to my surprise uttered a deep groan; then hastening over the insecure bridge, I found the maiden almost senseless, and I quickly cut the cord that was wounding her poor arm. It revived her.

"Give me my comb," said she.

As I turned to pick it up, I perceived that the oak had again changed to a monstrous human figure, whose countenance was expressive of intense hatred, and from a deep wound in the breast the blood was pouring in torrents. The eye of the monster was fixed on the golden comb; his arms, which were stretching longer and longer, had nearly reached it when I snatched it up, and placed it in the weeping maiden's hand. Then I cut the remainder of the silver thongs, and with a howl of disappointed rage the frightful figure shrank once more into an oak tree.

I said that I cut the remainder of the thongs, but I had overlooked one that bound her slender ankle to an iron ring fastened in the rock; the knot was very complicated, and I was obliged to have recourse to my knife, which in severing the cord unfortunately slipped, grazing the white skin. Three crimson drops trickled down, and when they touched the rock there sprang up three jets of golden water whose ringing music floated like chimes of silver bells into the air.

The maiden threw herself into the lake, and I feared that I was going to lose sight of her, but she rose looking more beautiful than ever, and resting her hand lightly on one of the fir branches, guided it to the shore.

"Kind stranger," said she, "will you allow an unhappy maiden to be your companion through the forest?"

"Most gladly," I replied, "though I cannot help wishing I were better fitted to be a knight-errant."

"Better as it is," rejoined my companion, sighing; "I would not wish any heart to ache as mine is aching now, and too many years have passed over your head for it to be filled with idle dreams and fancies."

If I had been a courtly dwarf I should have told her that beauty such as hers might make even older and wiser heads forget age, and, remembering but love, grow young again in heart, and fancy that spring-time had returned to them. But I am no courtier, and the maiden was in sorrow, so we travelled on in silence. At length my companion spoke.

"My name is Loreley," said she. "I am the daughter of a mighty ocean-king. Deep under the waves is my father's coral palace. There my mother weeps in her pearl inlaid chamber, for she thinks me a degenerate daughter. I have many sisters, and they are all as fair I am; and in the evenings, when the sun is going down in a broad blaze of splendour, they rise to the surface of the waters, and comb their glistening locks, and sing so sweetly, that no mortal can forbear to listen to their songs. The fisherman, in his little boat, rests on his oars to hearken; but it is woe to him, for he sees not the fatal breakers ahead, and he goes deep, deep down, never to rise again, with that strange sweet music ringing in his ears. The pilot forgets all danger when the first low notes sound over the waves, and he steers the vessel in the direction from whence they come. Ah! my sisters are clustered on sharp, terrible rocks, over which the ocean spray froths, so that they can-

not be discerned, and their lovely voices grow sweeter and softer, and not only the pilot, but the rude sailors, are entranced, and the vessel strikes on the treacherous rock—there is one cry of despair—then all is still! My sisters rejoice, for they have an enmity to the race of mortals. I used to join with them, but at last my heart sickened to see the brave and beautiful go down to an untimely grave in the wild waters, lured by our deceiving songs, and I felt pity for the miserable human race; and at length my pity grew to love, and I would have saved them, but my feeble warning voice was drowned in the rich clear chorus of my sisters' voices. Sometimes I was fortunate enough to save a solitary mariner, but I pined and fretted, and cared no longer for my own people. My mother lamented at the change that had come over me.

“‘I see how it is,’ said she, ‘thou wouldst have a lover from the race of men. Little as I wish for such a son-in-law, it is better than letting thee grieve away thy beauty; so that if thou wilt choose thee a husband from amongst mortals, we will welcome him in our dominions.’

“My heart leaped with joy when I heard this. I longed impatiently for evening to come, when I might go forth to seek my earthly love. At the first straggling ray the sun sent down to tell us he was sinking to rest, I ascended, but not to the wide ocean, where my sisters were singing their enticing songs. I bent my course to the noble Rhine river, whose banks are lined with stately castles, for I knew that many a fair prince dwelt there, and there was

one I had seen whose image would not leave my heart.

"I floated along, singing a gentle lullaby; the listeners thought it was the breeze stirring the strings of a harp, and little cherub faces nestled closer to their pillows, and dreamed of birds singing far away in Paradise; and on I floated, and many a quaint city and turreted palace I passed, and still I could not find the prince I was seeking. At length I paused beneath the shade of some linden trees; and as I rested I heard voices, and looking through the leaves, I saw, stretched on the velvet turf, the one I sought. But he was not alone, a lady was sitting near him; her eyes were cast down, and the long lashes rested on her cheek, and the sun was shining on her dark brown hair, tinging it with a golden gleam. The prince was lying at her feet, and looking up into her face, and I knew that there was nothing in the world so precious in his sight, and a dark cloud seemed to come before my eyes, and a cold pain darted through me; but I said, 'The prince shall be mine; she is fair, she can find many to love her, but I can only find this prince.'

"Then I rose softly, and passed by them. The lady lifted up her fringed eyelids and looked for one moment with her lovely eyes at the pale stranger who hurried past. When I had gone a few paces I stopped, and, directing my steps towards the river, I stood for an instant on an overhanging crag; then, extending my arms, I uttered a wild cry, and plunged into the water.

"The prince and his companion started to their feet.

“ ‘Save her! oh save her! she will be drowned!’ gasped the lady as she gazed at the apparently lifeless form that rose to the surface.

“My rival had pity on me, but I had no pity for her!

“The prince needed no urging; already had he sprung down the steep rocks; already had he thrown himself into the rolling waters; already had he grasped me in a strong grasp, and was bearing me towards the shore, when his strength failed him, the fragile form that his arm encircled became as a leaden weight, and dragged him down. In vain his efforts—down, down he sank, and the last words his cold lips murmured were, ‘Adelheid! Adelheid!’

“And so I bore my love to the coral caves; he felt no pain, he was but in a deep swoon, and I laid him down upon a couch of softest sea-weed, and knelt down beside him to watch his awakening.

“I chafed his hands and feet to bring back life to them, but he was motionless; I smoothed back the dripping locks from his noble forehead, and then I bent down and touched his pallid lips with mine.

“He started, half unclosed his eyes, and murmured ‘Adelheid! Adelheid!’

“Ever Adelheid! and the dull pain shot through my heart. Presently he looked around.

“ ‘Where am I? Was not some one drowned? a fair maiden borne away by the tide?’

“He did not recognise me; he did not know that it was I who had separated him from his Adelheid.

“Then I said, ‘Fair prince, the waters have brought you down to our dominions. Do not mourn

for earth and its fleeting joys; here is deathless life under the deep blue waters. In palaces of pearl, amidst gardens of glorious sea-flowers, such as no earthly imagination can conceive, shall your days be passed. Fair are the sea nymphs, and their voices are sweeter than the voices of earth.'

"But I could not comfort the prince. He took no pleasure in the stately coral trees, and in the beautiful marvels of our ocean regions. He gave himself up to despair, and his only cry was 'Adelheid! Adelheid!'

"I waited on him, I tended him, and brought him rare fruit and costly wine; and as the days flew on he began to take notice of me, and to speak kindly to me.

" 'My pretty little Loreley,' said he, 'would you not like to quit these cold regions, and rise through the blue waters to where the sun is shining in the free air? Would you not like to choose a lover from amongst the sons of men?'

"Then my heart leaped; for I knew if I could find one of the human race to love me, I need no longer dwell in our stately palaces, so cold and cheerless, though so magnificent.

" 'But who would love me?'

" 'Many, many!' answered the prince.

" 'You would not, my prince?' I said.

"Then the prince's face clouded over, and he replied—

"We of the human race esteem it worse than death not to keep true faith. I have but one love—Adelheid! But there are handsomer knights than I

am. Would that I could be permitted to choose one for thee !’

“ But I shrank away, and all day long I thought of the prince’s constancy, and knew how hopeless was my love. Yet I loved him more than ever. When evening came I was filled with a strange longing to visit the upper world once more, for I had not been there since I had carried away the prince.

“ Up to the old Rhine river, close under the linden trees ! There was but one figure now—so worn, so pale, with the large lovely eyes seeming larger than ever, because the face had grown so thin. There she sat, looking down into the river, as if in its depths she would find her lost prince.

“ ‘ Conrad, Conrad !’ The beloved name was ever on her lips. A sprig of heliotrope fell from her hand ; I caught it as it fell. When I descended to our palace, I hastened to the prince.

“ ‘ Prince, I have news for you to-night. I have been far away to Rhine-land, and beneath the linden trees I saw a lady weeping, and she said, “ Conrad, Conrad !” and this flower fell from her hand.’

“ The prince snatched the sprig of heliotrope, and kissed it many times. Then he turned to me, and stroking away my hair, gave me one kiss upon my forehead. ‘ Kind, good Loreley !’ And my heart smote me, in spite of my joy.

“ It was some time before I made another ascent to the realms of earth, and I saw a sad sight under the linden trees—a lady wasted almost to a shadow, and she said, ‘ Conrad, my beloved, I shall not linger long !’

"Her attendants turned away their heads; they could not bear to see her grief. My eyes overflowed, and I sobbed aloud.

" 'Who is that?' asked the princess. 'Poor child, what ails thee?' for I had drawn nearer and nearer, that I might take one last look into those lovely eyes for Conrad's sake. 'My poor child, do not grieve; death will come sweetly to thee as it doth to me, and carry thee away from all earthly sorrow.' And she bent down her sweet lips to mine, and in that moment a new life seemed breathed into me.

"I stood up; my golden hair floated like a glory around me, and my eyes grew brighter than they had been for many a day. I knew that my beauty was more than mortal.

" 'Lady, you must not die,' I said, and I vanished.

" 'It is an angel!' said the attendants; and they took it for an omen of good.

"And this was what I had wrought! I had parted two faithful hearts, and brought no love to mine. A wondrous change came over me; I did not love Conrad less, but I hated myself more, and my whole thought was how should I restore Conrad to his Adelheid. But my mother and sisters counteracted all my plans; they knew that my life must be the price of restoring the prince to the earth; and so they watched me, that I might not speak to him, and at last chained me to the rock on which you found me, with the Wood-demon to guard me, whose power over me would continue until some one should be bold enough to attack him and restore to me my golden comb."

Here she ceased speaking, and I inquired—

“And what, fair Loreley, is your present purpose? To return to your father’s kingdom would be but useless, since you have no power there.”

“I have an ancient relative close on the borders of this forest; she lives beneath a mighty waterfall, where nought can be heard save the constant roar of the wild torrent. But it is music to her. She knows many potent charms, and may perchance help me; but I fear to travel thither alone, as the forest is infested with Wood-spirits, who are at enmity with our race.”

I assured her I was willing to accompany her, and after a wearisome day and night we arrived at the abode of the ancient crone.

“There she is,” said Loreley, “pouring the water over the great boulders.” But I saw only the grey mist.

As we came nearer, the mist shaped itself into a dense shadow, and when we reached the foot of the cascade a diminutive wrinkled old woman asked in a sharp tone—

“And what has brought you here, niece, and what strange companion is with you?”

She spoke quickly, and with some irritation. Nevertheless, she invited us to enter her cave, where, as Loreley had told me, nothing could be heard but the roar of the falling waters.

Loreley told her story.

“Can you help me?” she asked in conclusion.

“Alas, my child!” said the old water-witch, “do you know the price?”

"My life for his."

"Ay, your life, your life! No more gliding through the yielding waters. No more rejoicing in the pleasant sunshine. No more listening to the sweet and solemn music of the spheres that move in glittering splendour round us. No more sight of earth, or of those you love, but death! death, with no awaking, for the sea-nymphs have no souls. To be blotted for ever out of existence, as a thing that never had a being!"

"But I shall live in Conrad's remembrance, and for that I am willing to die."

"Poor, silly child!" said the water-witch, sadly, "I would fain not grant thy request."

But Loreley pleaded more and more earnestly, and at length the old witch gave way. Then Loreley bade me leave her, and seek without delay the spot where Adelheid was pining away under the linden trees. And so I found it.

The evening breeze softly waved the branches and sent a tinge of colour into the white cheeks of the dying lady. Suddenly she started; her lovely eyes gazed eagerly on something she saw in the distance. Surely it was a vision to summon her away.

"Conrad, my beloved, I come, I come!"

But it was no vision. Conrad's arm was round her, and by his side stood Loreley with a countenance of unearthly beauty.

"Adelheid, my beloved, I am saved!" said the prince. "Adelheid, Adelheid, you will not die!"

"She will not die," said Loreley, and her voice

sounded inexpressibly sweet and mournful. "Kiss me, fair lady, before I go, for my time is short, and I would have your forgiveness."

"What have I to forgive?" asked the wondering princess. But Conrad turned quickly.

"You will not leave us Loreley?" and he bent down and kissed her.

A sudden gleam of happiness lighted up her sad eyes, and with Conrad's kiss upon her lips she sprang lightly down the mossy slope. Conrad was restored, and she must pay the ransom—her life! her life!

The waters lifted up their crested waves to receive her as she melted into white sea-foam, and as the spray dashed on the mossy slope at the feet of the lovers, from out the ground forth started pure white flowers, such as had never been seen in Rhine-land before.

And the fierce rays of the sun may beat upon those flowers, yet they will neither wither nor fade; and the cold blasts of winter will pass over them and harm them not; and thus they will bloom on and on to far off ages, for they are the flowers of love, and love is immortal.

Conrad plucked one of the flowers and placed it in his bosom, and Loreley will live in his remembrance for ever.

The little brothers made no comments on this narration. Only Schnapps said, "Poor Loreley!" and wiped his silver spectacles.

CHAPTER II.

SCHNAPPS' STORY.

The Enchanted Mill.

JETTCHEN was asleep on the bed in her mother's cottage. She was very pale and thin; but people said that when the warm summer came again she would grow stout and strong like other children, and that the summer wind would bring back roses into her white cheeks. But summer was far off yet; it was not even time for Jettchen's favourite lilies to show their blossoms, nor for her beautiful golden-rain tree—for so she called the laburnum—to shake out its long bunches of flowers.

It was winter—cold winter—so cold that no snow-drops had peeped up out of the snow, or, at any rate, Jettchen's brother Adolf, some years older than herself, had not been able to find any, and he had been looking for them, late and early, to please his little sister. Adolf was watching Jettchen as she slept, and now and then he looked through the window to see what was passing outside. There was not much to be seen at the best of times, and now less than ever. Certainly it was market-day, but then few

people passed that way. Adolf, however, did see something, for he suddenly started up—

“Mother, mother!”

“Well,” answered the mother, “what is the matter?”

“Look, look,” returned Adolf, “at that woman going to market. I do believe she has a bunch of snowdrops in her basket. Will you not buy them for Jettchen?”

The mother went to the door, and called to the market-woman, who turned back.

“I have a poor sick child,” said the mother, “who wishes for some snowdrops. How much do you charge for them?”

But the market-woman replied, “You’re welcome to them; there are plenty growing where they came from. They cost me nothing, and I want nothing for them.”

Adolf had come to the door, and now he asked where the snowdrops could be found, that he might go and gather more when these should be faded. But the market-woman only laughed, and said that it was a secret. Then she went away.

The mother reached down a china jar with roses and tulips painted on it. In this Adolf arranged the snowdrops, and placed the jar where Jettchen would see it the moment she awoke. Soon she opened her eyes. They quite shone when she saw the beautiful white flowers, and a tinge of pink came into her cheeks with pleasure.

“Oh, mother,” said Adolf, “the snowdrops are bringing back Jettchen’s roses!”

The mother smiled at Adolf's speech.

"The lovely flowers!" said Jettchen. She was never tired of looking at them and praising them, and never seemed happy unless she had some of them in her hand. It was wonderful to see how they lasted; they neither faded nor withered, but kept quite fresh. But though the snowdrops did not fade, little Jettchen faded away, and in a few days she died.

"Kiss her," said the mother to Adolf, "and then you will never dream of her as she now lies so cold and still, but you will always see in your dreams your living Jettchen."

But she looked so like a beautiful waxen image that Adolf felt he should not mind dreaming of her. Nevertheless, he kissed her cold cheek. Many times he kissed her as she lay there; but at last she was carried away to be buried. Adolf wept sadly over the death of his dear little Jettchen. He dreamed of her, but not of his living playmate—always of a quiet little figure with fast closed eyes, and a bunch of snowdrops clasped in her hand. Again he dreamed of her still lying like a marble statue. And a third time he dreamed, and yet she did not move. And in his dream he called softly to her, "Jettchen! Jettchen!" and begged her to look at him, but she never opened her eyes. Therefore Adolf thought she could not be dead. He told his mother.

"Mother," said he, "I do not believe that Jettchen is really dead. I think that the fairies have taken her away."

But the mother shook her head.

Adolf went to the place where Jettchen was buried.

The snow had melted away, and the snowdrops bent their drooping blossoms over the grave; and as the youth bent down and wept, he heard tiny voices whispering to him—

“Take courage, Adolf! Jettchen is not here; go and seek for her.”

“Where must I go?” he asked.

“Look up, look up,” answered the little voices. And Adolf looked up.

Close beside him stood a small shaggy brown pony, saddled and bridled, quietly waiting, as much as to say, Mount me. So Adolf leaped on the pony’s back without more ado; and as he galloped off he heard the tiny voices singing after him—

“Good speed, good speed!”

But their voices were soon lost in the distance; and presently Adolf began to consider whether he had done wisely in mounting the shaggy pony.

The shaggy pony was not galloping now, only trotting along very briskly; but it seemed to Adolf as if he trotted faster than other ponies could canter. And he never got out of breath, and he kept quite cool, though Adolf was beginning to feel quite warm with the exercise, and to think that it would be pleasant to dismount and rest for a few minutes whilst he ate the piece of bread he had in his pocket, for the ride had sharpened his appetite. He gave the bridle a pull, and the pony stopped. Then he tried to dismount, but found it impossible to free his feet from the stirrups. Neither could he loose the bridle, which would not leave his hand.

The pony was decidedly an animal of amiable dis-

position. He manifested no symptoms of irritation at the tugs and jerks he received in Adolf's unsuccessful attempts to alight. He stood quite still, and it was evident he would stand as long as Adolf liked. But Adolf did not care to stay; for he argued thus—"If I cannot get off, I may as well ride on, and see if my journey has an ending. Better make the best of a bad bargain, since it seems I am fairly saddled with it."

Now this was rather an unhandsome mode of looking his gift horse in the mouth, and Adolf might have waited a little before he formed his conclusions. However, he slackened the curb and intimated to the pony that he might trot on if he pleased. The pony did please, so on and on they went. They passed through several villages but never paused. They overtook many travellers, but passed them by; and though the pony only trotted, no horse that they had yet met with, even at full gallop, could keep up with him. He was unquestionably a fast trotter.

Strange to say all feeling of fatigue left Adolf, which was well, as the most trying part of the journey had yet to come. They had not gone many miles farther before they came to the borders of a dreary sandy waste. Adolf looked at it in despair, but the shaggy pony trotted energetically on, ploughing up the sand and raising a cloud that, whilst it half blinded Adolf, effectually concealed them both, and covered their approach to a mill which stood in the middle of the desert, the owner of which was constantly on the look-out for travellers, whom he

captured and obliged to work for him; and there were numbers now grinding away with all their might at some internal machinery, for there was no water wherewith to turn the wheel, nor wind to move the sails, yet they were going round and round as briskly as if a rapid stream were flowing past and a fair wind blowing.

Beneath the walls the pony halted, and Adolf feeling his feet released from the stirrups sprang down at once, which he had no sooner done than the shaggy pony vanished. "This then," thought Adolf, "is the end of my journey, and if I can find a door I may as well knock and beg a night's lodging," for he had no idea what sort of place he had come to. High rose the walls, so high that he could not see the top of them, and they seemed strong enough for a fortress. There was a huge drawbridge too, but this was drawn up so that Adolf could not get in at the principal entrance. But as he looked up he saw a small door only a few feet from the ground; this he had not before observed, and now without much difficulty he climbed up to it and knocked softly.

Some minutes elapsed ere the knock was answered; then the door opened, and Adolf gave such a start that he nearly fell backward, for who should open the door but Jettchen. She did not seem so surprised as he was, and putting her finger on her lips to enjoin silence, she motioned him to follow her up a long flight of stairs into a small room. There was no furniture in the room, but there was a heap of straw in one corner. Jettchen made him lie down amongst it, and covered him up, so that he was com-

pletely hidden. Then she sat down to her work, which was twisting straw into ropes. As she twisted she half-chanted in a low monotonous tone an explanation of the snowdrops being magic flowers that had caused her to fall into a deep sleep—of the market-woman being the wife of the giant who owned the mill—of her having worked one poor girl to death with making ropes—of some one being wanted in the poor girl's place; and of Jettchen's waking up from a pleasant dream and finding herself filling the vacant situation.

Just then a shrill voice demanded—"What are you making such a noise about?" and the giant's wife put her head in at the door.

"Ah, you idle girl," said she, advancing into the room, "you have not done half the task I set you," and she gave Jettchen's hands several sharp blows with a switch.

Jettchen was very near crying, and Adolf very near jumping up, but Jettchen hearing a slight rustle in the straw, cast an imploring look in that direction. Fortunately the giant's wife did not notice it, but giving Jettchen's fingers another rap or two, went away.

When she was gone Adolf peeped out of the straw. "Don't cry, Jettchen; tell me what I can do to get you out of this place?"

"You can do nothing I am afraid," answered Jettchen, sorrowfully; "the mill is enchanted, and no one can go out of it without the giant's knowledge. If any one tries to escape he is sure to be brought back and treated more cruelly than before. There

are as many as a hundred prisoners here already ; the giant keeps them to turn the mill which grinds stones into gold dust. If you look through this chink in the wall you will see them."

Adolf looked through the chink, and saw part of the hardworked captives grinding away with all their might at a wheel which caused a heavy weight to descend and crush the worthless stones into glittering golden sand, whilst the rest shovelled the precious material into bags, which they ranged along the walls.

"One would be rich with a few of those bags," observed Adolf.

"Oh," sighed Jettchen, "I would willingly leave them all behind if I could only get away from here."

"That is the thing," said Adolf ; "is there no way?"

"Only one," answered Jettchen, mournfully, "and that is impossible."

"Then it is no way," returned Adolf, half laughing in spite of the adverse circumstance in which he was placed. "But tell me of this impossible way, Jettchen."

"The giant has an only daughter," said Jettchen ; "she sits in a room on the topmost story. No one ever goes up to her, not even the giant or his wife, and all the food she needs is hoisted up through fourteen trap-doors. There she sits and weaves a piece of tapestry. She has woven yards and yards of it, and it shows the history of the mill from the time it was built ; and as long as she goes on weaving no harm can happen to the giant, but if any one could climb up to the weaving maiden, and cut the thread

she weaves with, the mill would fall to the ground, and the giant and his wife would perish in the ruins."

Now Jettchen was not quite correct in her statement, for the weaving maiden was not the giant's daughter, but merely a captive, who was compelled to weave her web until some one should come to rescue her. This Adolf did not find out until afterwards.

"I should think she must be tolerably tired of her work by this time," said Adolf. "I wonder if one could get a peep at her."

"Alas! no," replied Jettchen, "for at each of the trap-doors sits a fierce dog, with flaming eyes and long, sharp teeth, and whenever the trap-doors are opened for the food to be drawn up they all look down, and howl so dreadfully, that it makes one shudder to hear them."

"I should like to have a try, notwithstanding," said Adolf.

Adolf was a brave youth, and it is said that fortune favours the brave. Fortune, however, was not propitious at this particular moment, for the door opened, and the giant's wife entered before Adolf had time to conceal himself in the straw.

"Heyday," said she, "so I've found out what all the noise was about! And pray, young master, how came you hither?"

Then Adolf stood up boldly and answered, "A shaggy, brown pony, all saddled and bridled, stood under the linden tree; I leaped upon its back, and it brought me here."

"A likely story," returned the giant's wife; but Adolf noticed that her countenance fell when he

mentioned the brown pony. "Come along with me," she continued, "my husband was wishing for just such a lad not long ago."

Jettchen threw her arms round Adolf, and begged that he might stay with her, but the giant's wife was inexorable.

"No," said she, "you will never see each other again, so you may as well make up your mind to it at once."

And Adolf was taken to the giant.

The giant was a surly-looking giant, and he was more than ordinarily surly at that moment, for his supper was not ready, and the barrel of beer he had just drained at a draught was exceedingly sour.

When his wife appeared he began to storm at her, and he gave Adolf a kick with his heavy boot that almost stunned him.

"Why have you brought another mouth to feed when there's not a morsel to be had for one's own eating?" demanded the giant, his mind reverting to his own grievances; "take him off to the lowest dungeon, and load him with chains."

"He came on a shaggy brown pony," replied the wife, mysteriously.

"I don't care if he came on twenty brown ponies," roared the giant; "do as I say, and don't give him anything to eat! Let him live as long as he likes upon nothing, but I can't afford to feed any more idlers."

So Adolf was put into a dark dungeon, and bound with heavy chains. This was a sad position for him to be in, and he felt half inclined to be angry with

the brown pony ; but then the thought that he had found Jettchen cheered him, and he began to hope that in spite of his present adverse fortune he might eventually be successful in effecting her rescue.

He sat down, and managed to pull out of his pocket some bread that still remained. It was but a crust, and dry enough by this time ; but Adolf devoured it with infinite relish, and thought he had seldom tasted anything more excellent.

The cell in which he was confined was cold and dark, and there was only a narrow barred window, scarcely more than a slit, through which the daylight might be admitted. But the daylight had faded away, and it was now quite dark. But soon a straggling ray of light darted through the slit. The moon had risen. Adolf dragged himself towards the window ; but the chain was not long enough to allow of his reaching it. He gave several pulls, and shook the chain violently. It snapped, and he was free. He hastened to the narrow window, and looked out. Far, far away stretched the sandy desert. There was nothing else to be seen. Adolf leaned against the thick wall, and sighed heavily. A gentle neighing answered him. He looked out. There was the shaggy pony. The shaggy pony could not speak, so Adolf did not know what he wanted. However, he put out his hand as far as he could, in order to pat him. And the pony reared up on his hind-legs, and put his nose against the slit. Adolf rubbed his hand over it. The pony opened his mouth and dropped a billet, which Adolf picked up.

Now fortunately Adolf had learned to read, which

was by no means a common accomplishment in those days ; so that when he opened the billet he was able to read the following words :—

“ The unfortunate maiden in the tower sits weaving and weaving her life away. Will no one set her free from her weary task ? ”

“ Just as I said,” commented Adolf ; “ I knew she must be heartily tired of it.”

Then he pricked his arm till the blood came, and with a straw wrote on the other side of the paper as follows :—

“ Fair maiden, I will risk everything to help you, if you will only tell me what to do.”

I cannot tell you how Adolf knew that she was fair, as he had never seen her. Perhaps he merely put it in as a compliment. This was not quite right, as it is never well to flatter people. In this case, indeed, it turned out that the maiden was fair, so that the truth was unintentionally spoken. But this, you know, might not always happen.

When he had finished his epistle, he threw it out of the window.

Once more the brown pony put his nose against the slit, and this time a bunch of juicy grapes fell at Adolf's feet.

How those grapes revived him.

He fell asleep, and dreamed that the mill was destroyed, and that he was master of the bags of gold dust.

Dreams do not often come true. Generally they deceive us, and things happen just contrary to their foreshadowings. Dreams, I suppose, are our hopes

passing like beautiful pictures before us, so truly painted that we believe them to be real. Adolf's dream certainly was his hope; but I cannot tell you before the end of the story whether it came true.

When Adolf awoke, his first act was to fasten the chain, so that it might not be seen that it was broken; for he felt sure of a visit from the giant's wife. However, the day passed away, and she did not come, and he began to fear that he should be left there to starve. As for getting out of the dungeon, he saw no possible means of doing so; for even should he manage to wrench away the iron bar, the window was too narrow for him to push through.

As the shades of evening fell, the neighing of the shaggy pony was heard again, and another billet was dropped into the prison, and, what at that moment was far more acceptable, some food; also a small flask of water.

Eagerly was the food devoured by Adolf, and then he read the contents of the letter:—"Ten days from this," it said, "is the giant's birthday, and he always drinks an extra barrel or two of wine upon the occasion, and sleeps more soundly than usual afterwards. If you will find your way to the first trap-door a rope shall be let down to you."

"If!" said Adolf to himself with some emphasis; for he thought of the fourteen dogs with flaming eyes that kept watch at the fourteen trap-doors.

His next epistle to the weaving maiden was short and concise. Simply these words:—

"What of the fourteen dogs?"

The shaggy pony went backwards and forwards

with letters for nearly a week. He also brought Adolf food ; and in the course of the correspondence Adolf learned that he would have nothing to fear from the fourteen dogs, who were tired to death of sitting looking at nothing but trap-doors, the very contemplation of which roused them to a state of rabid indignation, and they would willingly assist any one whose efforts would tend to liberate them from their monotonous occupation. But the difficulty was how to get out of the dungeon.

Fortunately, on the morning of the tenth day, the giant's wife was seized with a desire to see whether Adolf was still alive. Not that she had any pity for him ; she hoped to find him dead, though, for some reason, she dared not kill him herself. To her surprise, she found he looked no worse than when she had placed him there, so she unlocked the chains and told him to follow her.

"Here," said she to her husband, "is a youth who is so strong that it does him no harm to go without food for ten days."

"Ha, ha !" answered the giant, "the very lad for me ; he'll be a cheap servant if he can live upon air ! He shall begin to-night and carry up wine for me."

Then the giant went off to take a walk that he might get up an appetite for his birthday carouse.

Adolf followed all the directions of his mistress ; nay, he even exceeded them ; for he laid the supper-table so neatly, and prepared so many new dishes, that when the giant came home he condescended to express himself satisfied with the arrangements.

Adolf had found in the cellar some enormous glass

bottles that held I cannot tell you how many gallons each. These he had carefully cleaned out and polished up, and now they stood ranged along the board, filled with rich ruby and bright golden wine, that sparkled and glimmered enough to tempt a less gluttonous person than the giant to take a draught. The wine had never looked so well before, whatever it might have tasted, and the supper never half so inviting.

The giant ate and the giant drank ; and it seemed to Adolf that his head must be made of iron to stand so many bottles without feeling any effect from them. At length the giant began to look drowsy ; then he nodded his head ; then he fell asleep ; then he woke with a start ; then he quaffed another huge goblet of his beloved wine, fell asleep in earnest, and rolled off his chair.

Now was the time : in another moment the giant's wife would be in the room !

Quick, quick ! He threw a pebble, the signal agreed upon, at the trap-door. It opened. An enormous dog with flaming eyes looked down and nodded. Then a rope descended. Adolf seized the end of it, and was drawn up. The trap-door closed, and he paused to take breath.

The large dog was certainly as large as an ox. He did not move, but Adolf presumed him to be friendly from the fact of his continually nodding his head at him.

Then Adolf peeped down through a little crack. The giant's wife was putting a pillow under her husband's head. She had not missed Adolf yet, but he must not delay. He took a glance upward ; the

other thirteen dogs were looking down, their eyes flaming like so many great gas-lights, which was an advantageous circumstance, as the night was very dark.

The first dog now took the rope between his teeth and held it firm, and Adolf began his ascent. He was a good climber, but to go up a rope through thirteen trap-doors is something of a feat. Nevertheless, up he went. As he ascended he noticed that the dogs diminished in size, so that the last dog was not much larger than a lady's lapdog. I think he had a vague idea in his mind that this was in some way owing to perspective, but of this I cannot be certain.

At length the chamber of the weaving maiden was gained. There the maiden sat, with her tapestry frame before her, weaving with never-resting fingers her weary work. She had long braids of silky black hair, and her eyes sparkled like diamonds; her dress was of silver-tissue, and a crimson scarf was round her waist. She surpassed Adolf's expectations, and it is rarely our expectations are realised, much less surpassed, so she must have been very beautiful.

Perhaps Adolf had scarcely indulged in expectations, for, to tell the truth, his thoughts had been more with Jettchen than with the weaving maiden. A pair of golden scissors lay on the table.

"Cut the thread," she cried; "make haste, make haste!"

For the giant was awake, his head was already through the first trap-door.

Adolf cut the thread.

Crash, crash, the mill is falling ! Down, down from its fourteen stories descends the weaving maiden's chamber like a leaden weight—the dogs are loose—the mill sails crack and splinter—the walls totter and crumble with a noise like thunder. Crash, smash, the noise is deafening—the mill is down—the giant and his wife are buried in the ruins ! Nothing can be seen, so dense are the clouds of dust.

The weaving maiden keeps close to Adolf.

“ Jettchen ! Jettchen ! ”

And Jettchen stood by Adolf with her hand twined in the shaggy pony's mane.

The brother and sister flew into each others' arms.

The pony disappeared, and was only seen once again.

Not one of the poor captives who turned the mill-wheel was hurt. Adolf gave each of them half-a-dozen bags of gold dust, so they went home to their relatives quite rich and happy.

The dogs with flaming eyes also dispersed in different directions, with the exception of the smallest, which remained with the weaving maiden, and became her lapdog.

From the ruins of the mill a magnificent castle started up, and the desert became a stately park for miles and miles round. I passed through it in my travels, and stayed a night at the castle, where Count Adolf von Muhhradstein and the Countess Bertha received me with great kindness.

I may remark that the Countess Bertha has beautiful black hair, and that the tapestry which decks the walls of the great hall of the castle was wrought by

her fingers, and one side of it represents the story I have been telling you.

I said that the shaggy pony was only seen once again. That once was two days after the destruction of the mill and its transformation into the magnificent castle it is now. On the second morning the shaggy pony quietly trotted up to the door with a respectable matron on his back, who alighted and rang the bell.

The door opened, and out rushed Adolf and Jettchen, crying—

“Mother! mother!”

It was a joyful meeting, and let us hope it will be long before there is another parting.

“But how did you find your way here?” began Adolf.

“A shaggy brown pony—” here the mother stopped and looked round.

“Why he’s gone,” said she.

And so he was, and that was the last that was ever seen of the shaggy pony.

“A capital fellow that brown pony,” said Fritz; “what a pity nothing more was heard of him; and why was the giant’s wife afraid of him?”

“Just what I asked Count Adolf, but he could not tell me.”

“Perhaps he was not really a brown pony,” suggested Klapps.

“Yes he was,” said Schnapps somewhat sharply, for he did not like the identity of his characters being questioned.

"I thought that perhaps he might have been a prince in disguise," returned Klapps meekly.

"No he was not," answered Schnapps, still a little ruffled, "I should have told you if he had been."

"Of course, of course; only I don't see who there was for Jettchen to marry."

"Oh, is that it?" said Schnapps, slightly mollified; "Jettchen had her full share of the gold dust bags, so there is no fear of a lack of suitors. No need to be coining princes out of brown ponies for a husband for her."

And Schnapps laughed merrily, and in that laugh his irritation passed away.

"I should like just such a pony as that myself," said Fritz, still musing over the shaggy brown pony.

"So should I," added Peter.

"And I."

"And I."

But what use is there in wishing?

CHAPTER III.

FRITZ'S STORY.

Griff and the Silber Pheasant.

THIS was the title that Klapps read out.

"Stop!" exclaimed Fritz.

"Why? What is the matter?"

"Do you think you could manage the tube?" asked Fritz, fumbling in one of his large pockets; "Griff would like to hear it, so might the hares."

And as he spoke, having succeeded in finding the wonderful tube, he placed it in his mouth.

"Griff, old fellow, do you remember the silver pheasant, eh?"

Griff's countenance underwent a curious change; his eyes twinkled, and at last closed up altogether; then he gradually opened one and looked at Fritz, as much as to say—

"I should think I did."

The look was not lost upon the five little brothers. Griff rose some degrees in their estimation, and Klapps observed—

"I do believe he is a sharp fellow after all."

Fritz laughed and repeated the observation to Griff, who was very near laughing himself, but being a polite dog he merely showed his white teeth in a prolonged smile, and turning towards Klapps, winked at him, thereby intimating—

"You've hit it, old boy!"

No words could have conveyed his meaning more clearly, and that wink placed Griff's reputation for sagacity beyond all question.

"Perhaps I had better read the story myself," suggested Fritz; "you might find some difficulty in using the tube."

Fritz had been employed in calling the attention of the different creatures who had taken refuge in the cave, and now he had them ranged around. The hares sat pricking up their long ears, a dormouse crept close up to the fire, an ancient raven perched upon the bookstand and gravely eyed the manuscript, as though he had been accustomed to such things from his youth upward; half-a-dozen or more other birds removed their heads from underneath their wings, stretched themselves once or twice, fluttered uneasily, and finally settling into a wide-awake condition, looked down at Fritz with an air of interest.

"Wonderful! wonderful!" said Peter, rubbing his hands; "what an effect that tube has!"

"It's my opinion," said Klapps, "that Orpheus must have had something of the same kind."

"I dare say he had," returned Peter, thoughtfully, "though it never occurred to me before."

Then Fritz placed the tube in his mouth and read as follows :—

“Many hundred miles from hence there is just such another forest as this is. It may be larger. I am not quite sure about that ; but the trees are no finer, the grass no greener, the nuts and roots no more plentiful than they are here, and yet it is a favourite resort of game of all kinds, and one would think that any sportsman happening to take a lease of it might fancy himself in Elysium.”

Here Fritz perceived he was treading upon dangerous ground, for the hares and two plump partridges showed marked signs of disapprobation.

“Not,” resumed Fritz, “that any sportsman is likely to be so adventurous, for though the place offers great inducements, those who have tried a day’s shooting there have found that instead of bagging any game they have invariably lost the valuable dogs by which they were accompanied. Therefore the forest has acquired a bad name, and I believe that now all dogs when taken there refuse to point.”

Fritz looked towards Griff, who nodded in corroboration of this statement.

The hares and partridges cast glances at one another, as if to intimate that this would be the very place for them. They had evidently begun to think of migrating.

Fritz proceeded—“The forest was undeniably fatal to dogs. From the most disreputable looking little terrier that ever killed forty rats in as many seconds, to the highly respectable pointer, or the carefully trained greyhound, none escaped. Even the Countess

Von Hohengrunenbrunnen's fat lapdog being within tempting distance of a fine woodcock, and making a lazy and abortive attempt to spring upon it, disappeared and was never seen again. The Countess caused the fern to be carefully searched in all directions near the spot where the beloved animal was last seen, but to no purpose.

"It is said that in consequence of their continued immunity from danger, all sorts of game would walk leisurely across the path of the sportsman, as if in defiance of him, and that this boldness of theirs, instead of rendering them an easy prey to his practised aim, served merely to unnerve him, and if he fired at all, the shot went pattering away in quite a contrary direction. So the forest gained the reputation of being bewitched, and people became cautious of venturing therein.

"At length a young nobleman, more rash and daring than his neighbours, determined upon having a day's sport there. All that could be urged was insufficient to deter him from carrying out his intention. In vain his father commanded, his mother entreated; the mind of the youth was so bent upon the wild project that no one could dissuade him from it.

"Of course, nobody would go with him, though some of his friends accompanied him to the edge of the forest, where they bade him a solemn farewell.

"And of course no dogs were to be found that could be tempted to follow him. The youth would have been obliged to depart unattended, had he not suddenly remembered having seen a half-starved

looking dog tied up at the door of a cottage on his father's estate. To this cottage he at once repaired, and for a small sum of money bought the tall, lank, miserable looking animal from its owner.

“‘What is the dog's name?’ asked the Baron.

“‘Griff. He'll follow any one who will show him a bone.’

“‘Poor fellow,’ said the Baron, patting him, ‘he does not look much else himself. Hi, lad, take this,’ and the youth took a slice of meat from his wallet and threw it to the dog.

“The dog eagerly devoured it, wagged his tail, and looked up in the Baron's face, as if he would say, ‘I'm ready to follow you to the world's end.’

“And so I believe he was, and quite as much for the sake of the kind, cheery voice that spoke so pleasantly to him, as for the food of which he stood so much in need. Most dogs have generous natures, and a little kindness wins them at once. And no doubt he also perceived that the young Baron was a bold, free-hearted, enterprising youth, and his heart leaped to follow such a leader. He knew that whatever might betide, his own fortunes could not very well be worse than they had been.

“‘When things come to the worst they must mend,’ had been Griff's apothegm as he patiently starved through the day on the scanty scraps that were bestowed upon him, and barked through the night to scare the thieves from his master's dwelling, so that he now felt as if he were turning the corner of a new road, and must consequently altogether lose sight of the old one.

"I think," said Fritz, half-aside, appealing to Griff, "that such were your sentiments?"

Griff wagged his tail approvingly, and gave a short bark, at least so it seemed to the brothers, but Fritz heard an assenting sentence in pure dog language.

"The Baron strode on, and Griff followed close at his heels. It was not long before they reached the forest. The Baron looked anxiously at Griff to see whether he showed any symptoms of reluctance at entering it; but either Griff had led so secluded a life that he had not heard of the fatal results attendant upon sporting expeditions in those parts, or else the sweets of liberty had infused a reckless spirit of daring, for he gave no sign of wavering. Undauntedly he followed the Baron, whose own spirits rose still higher at finding himself accompanied by so congenial a companion.

"They made their way through the long fern and thick grass, sometimes wading through picturesque marshes, where the unusual sound of a gun startled for a moment the shy herons.

"Griff held himself ready to obey any order the Baron might give, and although not trained for sporting, he seemed to have an intuitive perception of what was required of him.

"But the Baron sauntered on, determined to explore before commencing operations, and Griff fell into his humour, and jogged along imperturbably, in spite of the numerous temptations that beset him in the shape of snipe, grouse, partridges, and woodcocks.

"But although one may resist ninety-nine temp-

tations, the hundredth will often come and upset all previous good resolutions. And so it was with Griff; he had resisted the ninety and nine in the shape of minor game, but the hundredth was too much for him.

"It came in the form of a fine silver pheasant. Such a silver pheasant neither Griff nor the Baron had ever seen before. It was a splendid bird—magnificent!

"Up sprang Griff! Bang went the Baron's gun! The silver pheasant lay bleeding on the ground—its wing was broken.

"'Not a bad prize for a first shot,' quoth the Baron to himself, thinking, I am sorry to say, with some contempt of the commands of his father, the entreaties of his mother, and the advice of all his excellent kinsfolk and neighbours.

"He was just on the point of stowing away the silver pheasant in his game-bag, when his attention was called by Griff to two more silver pheasants, who appeared as if waiting to be shot.

"Griff watched every movement of his master. Bang went the gun! and Griff and the Baron bounded forward; but this time the birds had escaped. Still they only flew a little further off, and then alighted.

"The Baron reloaded his fowling-piece, and forgetful of the wise saying that a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush, left the wounded pheasant to its fate, and pursued the new-comers.

"On and on the birds flew, and on and on followed Griff and the Baron. The birds seemed almost

spent, and flew into a cavernous opening amongst some brushwood.

“ ‘Caught at last!’ said the Baron, as he went in after them.

“ But it was the Baron who was caught, and not the pheasants; for as he turned a sharp angle, the aperture by which he and Griff had entered suddenly closed behind them, and they found themselves regularly trapped.

“ The Baron looked at Griff, and Griff looked at the Baron; and I have no doubt they both felt very foolish.”

Here Griff nodded.

Fritz continued:—

“ Upon recovering from their surprise they looked around, and found themselves in a spacious subterranean apartment, round which were ranged dogs of all descriptions, fastened by chains to the wall—pointers, setters, retrievers, some pensive-looking beagles, whose meek and mournful faces might have moved the heart of a stone, greyhounds, a large Newfoundland dog, who in an unhappy moment had been unable to resist the attractions of some water-fowl, a venerable fox-hound, besides others too numerous to mention.

“ Nor were dogs the only captives.

“ To Griff’s amazement, he recognised an old acquaintance amidst a group of cats that were tied up in a corner.

“ ‘Well, Grimalkin,’ said Griff, ‘who would have thought we should have met here? You’ve paid the penalty of poaching at last!’

"'For the matter of that,' retorted Grimalkin, 'so have you it seems; and there's no use in insulting a friend in misfortune.'

"'Friend, indeed!' returned Griff, with some disdain. 'Remember how you used to steal my dinner, and lap up the milk that was set for me. I can't help feeling glad that you've met with your deserts. If I am trapped myself, it is a great relief to my mind to find that you are here, and to know that you are not suffering, as I am, with an easy conscience.'

"'Cats have no consciences,' said Grimalkin, contemptuously.

"Griff was about to reply, when the opening at which he and the Baron had entered widened for a moment, and admitted the two silver pheasants who had lured them into their present position. They bore between them the wounded silver pheasant, and passing slowly through the apartment, retired through a rude door at the further end.

"The dogs hung down their heads as they passed along, and gave a melancholy howl.

"Towards evening food was brought round to all the animals by the two pheasants. A portion was also placed before Griff, and he being very hungry, speedily despatched it.

"The pheasants then made a sign to the Baron to accompany them, and he, motioning to Griff to keep close to him, followed them.

"They turned down a narrow passage, lighted by a single lamp, and the Baron was somewhat astonished to hear moans, as of a human being in pain. His astonishment was further increased when his guides

led him into a small but luxuriously furnished chamber, where he saw a lady lying upon a couch, with her arm broken, and evidently in a state of extreme suffering. She did not speak, but pointed to her arm.

"The Baron, fortunately, had dabbled a little in surgery, and was possessed of sufficient knowledge to enable him to bandage up the injured limb. The lady by signs expressed her gratitude, but still did not speak; therefore the Baron opined that she must be dumb, as he had never known a lady keep silence for so long a time before.

"She signed to him to be seated, and presently the two pheasants appeared, carrying a silver tray, loaded with delicacies; and the Baron, who had tasted nothing since breakfast, did not fail to do justice to the ample provision set before him.

"The wounded lady lay watching the Baron, but she spoke no word; and the Baron from time to time regarded the lady, and at every glance he gave she seemed to grow more and more beautiful. Indeed, it was not long before he came to the conclusion that if he had been taken prisoner, he had fallen into very pleasant quarters.

"It was obvious to Griff that the Baron and the lady were falling in love with each other.

"Now this might be highly satisfactory to the Baron, and might materially lighten his captivity, but Griff having nothing to take off his attention from the fact that he was a prisoner, felt more and more the irksomeness of his condition. Besides, he was in constant dread of being chained up with the

unhappy dogs in the outer apartment. He bemoaned the moment when the silver pheasant had appeared to him, and heartily wished all the pheasants in creation out of existence.

"Then a curious thought darted into his mind; he looked at the lady, he looked at the Baron.

"The Baron looked puzzled, as if a sudden thought had darted into his mind also. He looked at Griff, and he looked at the lady.

"The lady looked at both of them, pointed to her arm, and shook her head sadly.

"'Pray, Madam, are you the silver pheasant?' asked the Baron, somewhat abruptly.

"The lady bowed her head.

"'How was it possible for me to know?' asked the Baron, gently.

"But the lady could not tell him, for she could not speak, or at any rate did not. Here was a mystery! a lady who had an opportunity of talking, and did not talk! It was as wonderful to the Baron as the fact of her being a silver pheasant.

"So the Baron and the lady could not come to any explanations. Still they were evidently well pleased with one another, and the Baron did not seem to be weary of his subterranean quarters, though days turned to weeks, and weeks to months.

"Griff, however, was terribly tired of wandering up and down and listening to the lamentations of his chained brethren, which were certainly not enlivening, and he made up his mind to abjure the attractions of silver pheasants from that time forth for ever.

"Day after day he saw the silver pheasants go out, and day after day he determined to make his exit with them. But they were too quick for him; and though he might watch close by the entrance for their return, he could not manage his escape.

"Thus matters went on—Griff getting more and more impatient; the lady, part of the time a lady, and part of the time a silver pheasant; the Baron more than ever in love, though at the same time firmly believing himself to be bewitched; and the two attendant pheasants doing the whole work of the cave with an ease and alacrity wonderful to behold.

"Now it happened that as things were in this state that I, Fritz, passing through the forest, was struck, as Griff and the Baron had been, with the remarkable beauty of a silver pheasant that fluttered across my path.

"Like Griff and the Baron, I determined to seize upon the treasure, and biding my time, I cautiously put forth my hand and the prize was mine.

"‘No use struggling,’ said I through the tube; ‘you are my prisoner.’

"The answer of the pheasant somewhat surprised me.

"‘My friend! my deliverer!’

"‘Humph!’ rejoined I, not knowing very well what to say.

"‘Come home with me,’ said the pheasant; ‘you little know the service you have rendered me.’

"Here was an unlooked for turn of affairs. A pheasant that I had just captured, and was about to carry off, actually inviting me to go home with it,

and thanking me for having caught it. However, as I had set off in search of adventures I never turned my back upon any, and here was the prospect of a very remarkable one.

“‘If I set you down you’ll run away?’

“‘Never!’ said the pheasant, earnestly.

“‘Never is a long time. Say, not till I give you leave.’

“‘Never till you give me leave,’ repeated the silver pheasant.

“‘Done!’ said I, placing it on the ground.

“The bird led the way, I followed, and we arrived at the cavern much in the same manner as Griff and the Baron had done. We went through the Court of Dogs, as the pheasant called the entrance hall, and proceeded to the inner suite of apartments. Here I found the Baron, and here a metamorphosis took place; the silver pheasant vanished, and I found myself face to face with a beautiful lady; not dumb, as the Baron had found her, but perfectly able to converse, and most anxious to enter into conversation.

“‘My friend,’ said she, seizing both my hands, ‘I have been waiting for you these hundred years.’

“‘Indeed!’ I replied, ‘I should not have thought it; you do not look a quarter as old as that.’

“‘Ah, my dear, good friend,’ answered she, ‘time takes no effect when one is in a state of enchantment. A wicked fairy condemned me to be a silver pheasant whenever I passed the limits of this cave, and never to regain my own voice until I should meet with a human being able to speak to me in the language of the pheasant tribe. It is true that I have been

growing old as a pheasant, but I have been taking care of my other nature, which has been lying by and has not been used for years until within the last few months, when this rash sportsman came into these woods, and I had the misfortune to have my arm wounded by him.'

"Here the lady slightly blushed and pointed to the Baron, who I noticed had not seemed over pleased at her making so much of me, and entirely passing him over in the conversation. However, he brightened up a little at the allusion to himself, and muttered something to the effect that if he had wounded her arm, she had revenged herself by wounding his heart. So I saw how the wind blew, and guessed that the lady would soon become a Baroness.

"'At length,' said the lady, 'I have recovered for ever my rightful form, never again to change it. The dogs may now have their liberty.'

"She sent the attendant pheasants to unfasten their chains. The entrance to the cave was thrown open, and in a few minutes we heard barks of joy mingled with an occasional yell, as some unlucky dog got kicked over by his stronger companions in their ebullitions of delight. This was followed by a simultaneous rush, and soon the pattering of the departing dogs' feet died away in the distance.

"Of course as many of the dogs had been in captivity nearly a hundred years, most of their masters were dead, so that but few could return to their old homes. However, being for the most part handsome animals they were not long without owners. The Countess of Hohengrunenbrunnen's fat lapdog was the last to

make his panting way out of the forest, and soon found a new mistress who became more devoted to him than even the countess had been.

"The lady then gave up her rights as queen of the forest to the two attendant pheasants, who had always been the most faithful and devoted of birds, and they rule there as king and queen to this very day.

"The Baron returned home without delay, and his father and mother received their beautiful daughter-in-law very kindly.

"The Baron and Baroness keep their own counsel concerning the mystery of the silver pheasant; but the Baron, as he beholds his lovely wife the admiration of the country round, cannot sometimes refrain from making the remark that his day's sport in the forest did not turn out so badly after all.

"As for Griff, he having had enough of barons and silver pheasants, decided to return home with me, and I must say that I consider him a very valuable addition to our circle."

"And so he is," said Kaspar, patting Griff's shaggy sides. "But what language do dogs speak, Fritz?"

"Dog-latin, of course," suggested Klapps.

Fritz smiled.

"Ah, I suppose they do," answered Kaspar.

"But will not the dogs who were set free tell all their acquaintances of the fine sport to be had in the forest, and so prevent its being the safe place for game that it has been?" asked Peter.

"By no means," returned Fritz ; " the dogs knew nothing of the circumstances which caused them to be set at liberty, so that there is no danger of their ever visiting the forest again ; and their account of the subterranean prison will not be such as to tempt any of their friends to try their fortune after silver pheasants, or any other game."

This speech reassured the hares and partridges, who had listened with some anxiety to the latter part of the story. They now gave themselves up once more to their slumbers, and dreamed of the return of spring and their journey to the wonderful forest.

CHAPTER IV.

PETER'S STORY.

The Poor Musician.

AN! if you could only see Johann Flussenberg's farm you would see a farm worth looking at. Such a quaint old house! part wood, part stone, with queer peaks and gables, and the oddest windows that ever were seen—belonging to no order of architecture whatever, but clearly an exception to all kinds of rules; and none the worse for that, for though regularity is excellent in many ways, it often leads architects to forget that there is no beauty in a straight line.

And if you could only see Johann Flussenberg's farm-yard, and his corn-fields, and his pasture-lands, and his barns, and his granaries, and his orchard! I am not sure whether you would prefer the orchard in spring, when the branches are covered with pink and white blossoms, or later on in the year, when the trees are bending beneath the weight of rosy apples, purple plums, red cherries, or luscious pears. Possibly, if you are very fond of fruit, the later

season might suit you best; but for my part, the sight of the pink and snowy bloom bursting forth amongst the early green fills my heart with joy, and brings up old memories of bygone times, making life seem quite fresh again. But this you will think very sentimental, so I will pass on to Johann Flussenberg's pigs, and sheep, and cows, and horses, strong, fat, sleek, thriving animals, not to be matched in that part of the country. But everything was thriving with Johann Flussenberg.

And if you could only see Johann Flussenberg himself! a stalwart farmer, six feet high, with a ruddy complexion, and not a streak of silver in his flaxen hair. And his wife! such a pretty little woman, in the neatest, trimmest costume that was ever devised. And Adhelm, Heinrich, Ernst, Georg, Lisa, Mina, Lotta, and the baby! Such a troop of little Flussens! Ah, you would think, and you might have a very much more unwise thought, "I should not at all mind being Johann Flussenberg!"

But Johann Flussenberg was not always a rich farmer. Once he was poor; so poor that he was thankful for a dry crust at supper-time, and thought himself fortunate if he got even that. You will wonder how he became possessed of all the fine things of which I have been speaking, and that is precisely what my story will be about. I allow you to know at the beginning that it will have a good ending, and so you need not be turning over the pages in a hurry to get to the last one, because I have put the last first, in order to satisfy your curiosity.

And now, having told you the end, let us return to the very beginning.

A good many years before Lotta and the baby came into existence, a poor man and woman lived at Blumendorf, and they had one child, a boy, whose name was Johann. They were so poor that they had no cradle for him, and no blanket wherewith to cover him; so his mother filled a tub with hay, and wrapped him up in an old cloak, and as he was too young to understand the difference between a cradle and a tub, or a cloak and a blanket, he was quite content, and slept as soundly as if he had had the most appropriate and newest bed-furniture imaginable.

Little Johann grew taller and stouter, and his parents grew poorer and poorer, for it takes more to satisfy three mouths than two, and most children, I can tell you, have very good appetites—certainly Johann had.

Naturally, as his parents grew poorer and poorer, they grew thinner and thinner; and at last they became so very thin, that I think they would have died if something had not happened to prevent it. This something was the passing through the village of a richly dressed stranger, who instead of putting up at the comfortable inn rejoicing in the sign of the "Bear and Flying Angel," chose to take up his quarters for the night at Joachim Flussenberg's cottage, why or wherefore, all the good people of Blumendorf, and particularly the landlord of the "Bear and Flying Angel," were at their wits' end to imagine, and could not imagine after all. Joachim

Flussenberg had not a bed in the house; it was a well-known fact that he, and his wife, and little Johann slept on the floor. This made the richly dressed stranger's choice all the more remarkable. However, I suppose the stranger was the best judge of his own affairs. I believe that most people do know their own business best, only this is a creed that does not find general acceptance in the world.

That day Joachim had been out cutting firewood, so that they were able to have a blazing fire. This was the only extra, for when the scanty supper was spread no additions were made, for Joachim could afford none, and as he sensibly remarked, "If people come to a poor man's house, they must put up with a poor man's fare."

He placed the best chair for his guest, and the wife put a clean cover on one of their poor pillows for him to lean his head against, but the stranger pitched the pillow into the fire, and said—

"Pshaw!"

Joachim and his wife were somewhat astonished, and little Johann made a dart forward as if he would rescue the burning property, but his father nodded to him to sit down again.

So he sat down and, leaning his elbows on his knees, gazed wonderingly at the stranger.

The stranger it may be presumed was neither hungry nor thirsty, for he neither ate nor drank; neither was he sleepy, at least he did not go to sleep, but sat close up to the fire, drawing strange figures in the ashes with his stick. Joachim and his wife felt it their duty as host and hostess to sit up with

him, but as he did not speak, neither did they, so that it was very quiet and very dull, and little Johann grew tired of sitting listening to nothing, if one may so express it, and soon rolled off to sleep.

When his eyes were quite shut fast the stranger pointed to him with his stick.

"Name?" said the stranger.

"Johann," answered the father.

The stranger appeared satisfied; he went on drawing figures in the ashes. After a time he again paused, and pointing to the sleeping Johann, said—

"Age?"

"Ten last Martinmas."

"Ha!" returned the stranger.

And this was all the conversation that passed. In the morning the stranger thanked Joachim for his night's lodging.

"You are a sensible man, Joachim Flussenberg," said he, "and know when to be silent. I am not going to give you anything for my entertainment, but I shall make your son a present. He will never be rich as long as he keeps it, but he must never part with it except in exchange for a fortune."

He drew from his doublet a violin.

"Come here, boy," he said to Johann, "and I will teach you how to play."

Now Johann did not know a note of music. Nevertheless, he took the violin in one hand, and the bow in the other, as directed.

"Think of your playfellows having a merry game in the woods," said the stranger.

Then Johann laughed, for he thought of a game they had had but the day before.

"Just whisper it to the bow, and then draw it across the violin."

Johann did as he was bid. He scraped backwards and forwards, and lo! the sweetest, merriest tones came from the violin—enough to set a whole village dancing.

"Stop," said the stranger. "Now think of something you have been sorry about."

Then Johann looked grave, for he remembered his pet rabbit that he had found lying quite stiff and dead one morning.

"Whisper it to the bow."

This time the tune was not lively, it was slow and sad.

"Now, keep the secret to yourself," said the stranger, "and don't tell it till you part with the violin." And then he went away.

As soon as he had gone all the neighbours came flocking in to hear what Master Flussenberg's good fortune might have been, and they felt much more neighbourly to Master Flussenberg when they learned that the stranger had not given him a single groschen, than they had done on the previous evening, when they had speculated upon his receiving one or two gold pieces at the least from his distinguished visitor.

"A worthy man is Master Flussenberg," vouchsafed mine host of the "Bear and Flying Angel." "I should be glad if fortune would give him a lift now and then. I'm not the man to be envious at the good luck of others."

And mine host felt very amiable, and he shrugged his shoulders, and ejaculated in an undertone, "Heaven keep the 'Bear and Flying Angel' from all distinguished visitors."

So no one felt at all envious of Joachim Flussenberg. On the contrary, every one was friendly to him. This was perhaps better than having gold pieces.

"But he gave little Johann a violin, and taught him how to play upon it!" said Madame Flussenberg, who did not care to have her guest undervalued.

"Oho!" said the neighbours, "taught him in' one lesson! that is good! Let us hear him."

So Johann whispered some pleasant thoughts to the boy, but, of course, he did not let the neighbours hear, for he could keep a secret; and he played such a merry tune, that the neighbours were astonished! They could not account for it.

"Here is a musical genius!" said one.

"This is something wonderful!" said another.

A third shook his head gravely and knowingly. And in the evening the matter was discussed at the "Bear and Flying Angel" with much zest.

"I think," said mine host, "it must have been—you may guess whom I mean—it is not wise to mention names, gentlemen, particularly as we all know the old saying relative to a certain person's appearance when he is spoken of; and we don't want such customers at the 'Bear and Flying Angel;' good Master Flussenberg is welcome to all such." And mine host laughed, and so did all the company.

Still the matter remained a mystery. It was but

a surmise of mine host ; nevertheless, it received considerable confirmation at another meeting at the "Bear and Flying Angel" a few nights after, when it was announced that Master Flussenberg's cottage was the only one in the village that had not a horse-shoe nailed up over the threshold.

"That settles the matter beyond dispute," said mine host, gravely ; "that is the reason *he* dared not venture into my house."

Now, the "Bear and Flying Angel" had a horse-shoe ostentatiously placed just underneath the sign, and "*he*," of course, referred to the stranger. What other antecedent could there be in the mind of any inhabitant of Blumendorf at that moment ? Therefore, Johann and his violin came to be looked upon with suspicion ; and though no one could dispute the sweetness of the tones he drew forth, nor remain entirely uninfluenced by them, yet they feared evil if they allowed themselves to listen ; and you might see them stopping their ears, and running away at the first note. As far as my opinion goes—though I cannot tell you who the stranger was, since he never appeared again to explain—I must say, that I do not believe St. Cecilia would have allowed an unworthy personage to encroach upon her prerogatives.

It was well for Johann that the inhabitants of Blumendorf were not the only people in the world, or his violin would not have helped to eke out the scanty earnings of his parents and himself ; but there were some music-loving souls whose occasional bounty went far towards preventing that catastrophe which

threatened the poverty-stricken Flussenberg. What they would have done without the stranger's gift it is difficult to say, since, even with its assistance, they could scarcely manage to live.

Madame Flussenberg, indeed, counselled getting rid of the violin, as she began to think that their troubles had increased since it had been in their possession; but Master Flussenberg remembered the stranger's words. Besides which, he had come to love hearing its cheery strains in the evenings. They made him forget his misfortunes, and carried him back to more sunny days.

"Let Johann decide," said Master Flussenberg.

Now, you must please to remember that though it takes only a few lines to write this down, yet that really some years had elapsed since the violin was given to little Johann, who was at this epoch a tall thin youth, of some eighteen or nineteen years, and betrothed to a maiden quite as poor as himself—perhaps poorer—but then, such a neat, pretty little maiden! Ah, well! young people will do foolish things; and, perhaps, this was not so very foolish, after all.

The farmer for whom Joachim worked had just given him notice that, unless the violin were got rid of, he would employ him no longer.

"Let Johann decide," said Master Flussenberg.

"Father," said Johann, "what the farmer pays you will keep you and my mother whilst I am away. I will take the violin and go and seek my fortune."

So Johann bade farewell to his father and mother,

and to the pretty maiden, Mina, and promising soon to come back, he set off on his travels. He had not gone far before he came up with a party of lads and lasses.

"Alas!" said they, "our pleasure will be spoiled! Hans, the piper, promised to be here to play for us, and we have already waited two hours for him."

"If that be all," answered Johann, "I will play as long as you like to dance."

So he drew out his violin and played away, and the lads and lasses danced till he thought they would have danced their feet off. They did not seem as if they would ever be tired; but then they did not often dance to such music. But night was coming on, so they were obliged to think of returning home, and they asked Johann to accompany them. He was willing enough to go, and they gave him a good supper and bed. They were not rich enough to give him money, but he set off the next morning with a bottle of their best wine and some good wheaten bread.

"This is not starving," said Johann to himself; "still it is not making a fortune."

He journeyed on, sometimes making a little money by playing, sometimes only obtaining food and lodging for his music. Once he was offered forty crowns for his violin, and in one great city a connoisseur even offered him a hundred and fifty; but though this was a goodly sum in poor Johann's eyes, still he knew that a hundred and fifty crowns could not be called a fortune, and so he determined not to part with the violin at present. Still, at times he almost

despaired, and more than once he was inclined to retrace his steps homeward. But the despairing thoughts came only when he was more tired than usual, or very hungry, and were soon driven away; and Johann plucked up courage, and persevered in journeying from town to town, playing with more fame than profit in most of them.

One evening when he was in one of his despairing moods he entered the most beautiful city he had yet seen. The streets were wide, the shops and houses magnificent, and the people richly attired. But this splendour, instead of rejoicing the heart of the poor musician, only made him feel his own poverty the more keenly. He felt too wretched to go through the principal thoroughfares, so he turned down a narrow street and went into the shabbiest hostelry he could find.

Whilst he was sitting resting himself, and eating a dish of Sauerkraut, he was struck by the conversation going on around him.

"What a pity our princess does not find any one to marry," said one.

"Ay," replied a second, "one would think there were no musicians in the world."

"Such a princess and such a fortune are worth trying for," added a third.

"Oh, there are plenty to try; the difficulty is to succeed," answered a fourth.

Johann pricked up his ears; this had clearly something to do with music. He joined in the conversation, and learned that the beautiful princess was a marvellous performer on the spinnet, and that no one

on the spinnet or on any other instrument was able to produce the wonderful music that she did, and no one could obtain her hand and fortune unless he should excel her on some instrument or other. Many were the rejected suitors, and you may be quite certain that they listened with jealous ears to all competitors, so that it was impossible for the Court to show any favour.

Johann said nothing about his violin, but when he had finished his Sauerkraut he left the inn and went straight to a tailor, from whom he purchased a handsome suit of clothes. To be sure it took the whole of his savings; "but nothing venture nothing win," thought Johann, and he was willing to risk a good stake for so rich a prize. Then he went to the palace, and said, that having heard of the princess's skill in playing, he had come to beg that he might be allowed to try his skill against hers.

All took him for a prince, for he was a handsome lad at all times, and now looked so exceedingly handsome in his new clothes, that one cannot wonder at the mistake they made.

So he was admitted, and it happened that he had come at a very opportune moment, for almost all the courtiers were assembled to hear the princess play a new and most difficult piece of music.

The old king was there, so was the old queen, so was Prince Adhelm, who was desperately in love with the princess, and was equally beloved by her, though he had not the comfort of knowing it, as she invariably treated him with the utmost disdain. Prince Adhelm had exerted himself and exhausted himself

upon the flute, cornet, bass-viol, and trombone, but all to no purpose, for though the princess had played several false notes designedly, the prince had played so many more accidentally, that all hope of winning the princess had faded from his mind.

Consequently, when Johann was introduced, Prince Adhelm looked daggers at him. The princess trembled and turned pale, and her music-master placed the new and difficult piece of music before her; but it was not until after much pressing on the part of the courtiers that she could be prevailed upon to play. However, she was determined to do her best, for since she could not marry Prince Adhelm, at least she would not marry any one else. So she began.

Crash went the opening chords, smash went a succession of chromatics from the top of the instrument to the bottom, up again and down the middle, then a rattling fire of octaves, then bang, bang, bang went the chords again; you could not have told for two seconds together where the princess's hands were: now they were here, now they were there, now they were everywhere at once! And she always struck the right note. Every one was astonished. Every one cried, "Brava! bravissima! What playing! What execution!"

As for Johann he was more astonished at the spinnet than at the player, for he thought what a strong little instrument it must be to stand so much knocking about. You see Johann was very ignorant, he did not know what good playing was. He listened, too, for the air, as if he were likely to hear it! It

was so hemmed in with runs and arpeggio passages that it could not make its way out. That was the beauty of it! It was clear Johann knew nothing about science in music.

Though the princess had required much pressing before she commenced her piece, she was evidently afflicted with the fault common to musical people in the days of Horace, and now seemed as if she would "never desist." But the forty-seventh page being turned over, the performance concluded, and Johann wondered which had suffered most from it, the princess or the brave little spinnet.

The princess threw herself upon a sofa; Prince Adhelm leaned over the back of it, and looked defiantly and triumphantly at Johann.

Johann, with a modest bow, stepped into the middle of the room; he leaned his cheek lovingly against his violin, he drew the bow gently across it, his lips moved.

"He is counting his time," muttered the music-master, contemptuously.

And Prince Adhelm's fears decreased.

But no, Johann was not counting his time, though that is a very desirable thing for players to do; he was whispering the story of his life to the bow; whispering of his poor parents in their poor home, of their scanty meals and threadbare garments, of rude taunts, and of contemptuous charity, bitterer far than the keen blast of adversity.

And from the violin burst forth a gush of melody so sad, so sweet, so thrilling in its pathos, that the listeners held their breath so that they might not

lose a note of the entrancing strain. It was unlike the cunning trickery of skilful fingers, or even the deep, rich sounds that experienced players can bring out of their instruments. True, the violin was one of rare quality, and its tones were full and clear, but there was something beyond this. Heart spoke to heart in the spirit-moving melody, and all owned the magic influence of that music.

Stern hearts gave way, and tears trickled down hard old faces. Hands long withheld grasped hands in sudden friendship. The very children who had been quarrelling with each other held up their little mouths to kiss and be at peace. The two court lap-dogs, whose lives were one continual snarl from morning to night, rubbed their noses together and amicably lay down on the same cushion; and a thievish magpie, after listening attentively with his head drooping very much on one side, struck by remorse, hopped out of the room and hopped in again with a valuable ring belonging to the queen, which had been fruitlessly searched for high and low. Indeed he hopped out and in so many times during the continuance of Johann's piece, that by the time it was finished he had heaped up quite a respectable pile of trinkets that had been lost and missing for many a day. Let us hope that his contrition was lasting.

The queen, who had led the king but a sorry life with her tempers, bent over to him and murmured, "Forgive me."

Whilst the king, who had all his life been pouring his domestic grievances into the ear of his bosom

friend, the Lord Chancellor—who, being similarly afflicted, was a ready sympathiser—whispered in answer, “Of what have I to complain?”

A blunt old courtier, who had held out against signing some document upon which the king was bent, muttered, “I’ll sign to-morrow, my liege.”

But the king replied, “Not so, I have given up my design.”

The princess sobbed out, “Oh, Adhelm, how cruel have I been to thee!”

And Prince Adhelm whispered, “Princess, to know that I am beloved consoles me for losing thee!”

I am not clear that the prince quite knew what he was saying; I rather think he did not; but then, you know, lovers are not generally logicians, and indeed I am not aware that logic and love have much in common beyond the first two letters.

But you see the power of music. These little interchanges of sentiment had caused no interruption to Johann, though he carefully watched the countenances of his auditors, and noted his own triumph.

Just then he changed his strain and whispered to the bow of a certain gallant hunting train that had passed through Blumendorf. The air was so lively and inspiring, and withal so descriptive, that the old king, carried away by a sudden burst of enthusiasm, waved his crown and shouted, “Tally-ho!”

And the old queen, whose comment but an hour before would have been, “You old fool,” now nodded her head graciously, as much as to say, “I too remember those merry times.”

But the hunting strain died away, and whispering the words, "Our Fatherland," Johann struck up their old national air.

You should have seen the stately court at that moment! All court formalities were lost sight of; "Our fatherland," was in every heart, on every lip, and the last chords of the poor musician were drowned in one deafening cheer, which, when it died away, was succeeded by a silence unbroken save by a few half-suppressed sobs.

Then the king, taking the poor musician by the hand, said, "The princess and her fortune are yours; may you long live to bring peace and happiness amongst us."

Now Johann, as you may well suppose, found himself on the horns of a dilemma; it was clear he could not have two wives, and he was already betrothed to Mina.

With much diffidence he stated his difficulty to the king.

"Give up Mina," returned the monarch, as if he had solved the question in a most simple and satisfactory manner.

But to that Johann could not consent.

"We must pass a law enabling a man to have two wives," said the king, who did not wish to lose such a peace-maker as Johann for a son-in-law.

"Please your majesty, they would continually fall out," suggested Johann.

"Tut man, play to them on your violin, and it will set all to rights!"

At this moment the Lord Chancellor, who had not

been present during the musical competition, entered. The king turned to him.

"Eh, my Lord Chancellor, what say you to our passing a law allowing a man to have two wives?"

Now the Chancellor supposed the king to be inclined for a joke, so he gave a knowing look and replied—

"We sometimes find *one* too much, your majesty."

"Speak for yourself, my Lord Chancellor," retorted his majesty, curtly.

Whereat the courtiers smiled, and the poor Lord Chancellor was somewhat crestfallen. However, he became enlightened in time, and resolved that the chancelloress should be present at the next violin performance.

Meanwhile, Johann had stepped up to Prince Adhelm, who seemed to listen to his rival with great affability.

"If it please your majesty," said Johann to the king, "I think I can make everything straight. I am but a poor musician, son of a farm labourer, and not at all fitted to be the husband of a great princess; also I am betrothed to a poor country girl whom I cannot forsake. Now here is a rich and noble young prince, who has loved the princess long and faithfully. The case stands thus—he wants a wife, and I want a fortune. He is willing to take the wife without the fortune, and I ask to be allowed to have the fortune upon condition of making the prince as good a violin player as I am myself."

"Very fair, very fair!" exclaimed the courtiers.

His majesty looked dubious, Johann was such a marvellous player that he was loth to let him depart.

"The prince shall play quite as well as I do," urged Johann.

"Well, on that condition," answered the king, "and only on that."

So Johann gave the prince his violin, and confided the secret to him; and on a day appointed the court met to decide whether Johann had fulfilled his promise.

Need I tell you that the prince played with his whole heart, and, consequently, was successful. In proof of it, I may mention that the chancelloress was present, and from that day the lioness became a lamb.

And this was how Johann Flussenberg gained a fortune.

Prince Adhelm added a handsome sum to the princess's dowry, and the princess sent a splendid bracelet, with a portrait of herself set in the clasp, as a wedding present to Mina.

And when Johann Flussenberg told me the story, madame, showing me the likeness of the princess, which was certainly very beautiful, said—

"Do you not wonder that Johann did not marry the princess, and live grandly at court?"

But Johann, looking round on his pretty little wife, his blooming children, his parents, happy in their old age, his fields, his orchard, and his pasture-lands, quietly answered—

"I am quite content with things as they are."
And so he might well be.

"It was a pity he could not keep the violin," observed Kasper. "Did not Joachim miss it very much?"

"A little at first; but the children's gay laughter and merry voices make music for him now that he would not exchange for all the violins in creation."

"I almost wonder Johann was not tempted to stay at court, and marry the princess; a fine life it would have been for him," said Klapps.

"Johann was something of a philosopher," replied Peter, "and knew that every man has his own peculiar niche, and that he will fit into no other half so well."

"Is that philosophy?" asked Klapps.

"Well, what a man is born to he comes to, I suppose," returned Peter, who was by no means argumentative.

"Ah, then it is destiny, not philosophy!" answered the imperturbable Klapps. "Johann Flussenberg was not born to be a prince, or else he would have been one, and could not have helped himself."

"Well then, he had sense enough to understand his destiny—which most people have not—and to know that he was never intended for anything but a farmer. And a jolly farmer he is! And he has a tender heart to those who are struggling on in the world; and above all, a poor musician, however badly he may play, is never sent empty-handed from his door."

“ I like that,” said Klapps ; “ a grateful memory in prosperity is a sign of true dignity.”

“ Ah ! Johann Flussenberg’s heart echoed the words of a great man, whose name I shall not tell you, because you ought to know it—‘ Despise not the poor musician ; I too have sung for my bread.’ ”

CHAPTER V.

KASPAR'S STORY.

The Student of Hermanstadt.

OCCASIONALLY a too slender acquaintance with a subject deludes a man into the belief that he understands it thoroughly, and therefore he continually harps upon it; whilst sometimes a very profound knowledge leads to a similar result; so that in either case the man proves a great source of annoyance to his friends.

I cannot tell you which was Gustav Engelmann's case; I can only tell you that he had been studying metaphysics till his mind became so much engrossed that he could pay no attention to anything that was passing around him.

This was very vexatious to his parents, who had looked forward to his being a help, and not a burden to them in their old age.

This was very vexatious to his pretty cousin Magda, who lived just opposite to the Engelmanns, and who, whilst Gustav had been taking honorary degrees at

almost all the universities in Germany, had been growing up into a blooming maiden. Every one in Hermanstadt acknowledged the fact; Gustav alone was blind to it; consequently he was precisely the person Magda wished to impress it upon; and his utter unconsciousness was, without doubt, most mortifying.

But I am not going to tell you how much annoyed Gustav Engelmann's friends were; that is no part of my story. Gustav Engelmann is the hero, and I wish your eyes to be fixed upon him, and not to be straying off to the subordinate characters.

Gustav Engelmann's home was in a curious little town with narrow streets: so narrow, that from the projecting upper stories on either side you might, if so disposed, shake hands with your opposite neighbour. Of course you must stretch a little to do this, but if one has friendly feelings there is not much difficulty in going more than half way to show them.

The room which Gustav Engelmann occupied was in one of these upper stories, but he had no wish to shake hands with his opposite neighbour; indeed, he was so wrapped up in himself and his own speculations, that I doubt if he knew that a kindly face sometimes looked over from the window across the way and smiled on the perplexed student.

And yet the window opposite, with the creeper trained round it, and the bright scarlet geraniums in grotesque flowerpots on the sill, formed a very appropriate framework for the picture that was sometimes seen there—the picture of a peasant maiden with honest blue eyes and shining yellow hair.

Many youths of Hermanstadt lingered to gaze upon it, but whilst they lingered a voice might be heard calling, "Magda, Magda," and then the picture vanished.

But this was quite lost upon Gustav Engelmann, who was pacing up and down his room absorbed in his own theories, and who, if he did look out of his window, did not see anything, but looked straight through houses, creepers, geraniums, peasant maidens, and everything else, into a dreamy distance for something that he could not find.

"Mind and matter, material and immaterial," were the words ever on his lips. "What is real? what is seeming? I see men and women moving around me; they may be phantoms, delusions, to whom my eye, aided by the mind, gives birth. Of myself alone can I be certain, all else is speculation. How can these beings that I see prove to me a like existence with myself? Am I the only man in the world, the only compound of mind and matter, and these mere puppets, mere machines, or mere phantoms? Kings live and die, empires go on, battles are fought, the curtain rises and a world-drama is enacted, whereof I am the only spectator; the curtain falls, the play is ended—I, the man, by seeing no more, blot out the pageant." So he went on in his wild, incoherent ramblings, plunging deeper into perplexities. His father thought his brain was turned by too much study. His mother believed him to be the victim of witchcraft, to which latter opinion Magda also inclined, for the abstracted student was so little like the merry Gustav of olden times, who used to take

such notice of her and tell her so many beautiful stories.

Day after day Gustav pursued his confused speculations; he passed through life as one in a dream, realizing nothing that happened. If food were placed before him he ate it, but he might have starved before he would have thought of asking for it. Once indeed his father thought that starving might bring him to his senses, only his mother would not allow the experiment to be carried out.

"Gustav," said Magda, "some one wishes to see you."

Gustav looked at her dreamily.

"Shall he come up, or will you come down?"

But Gustav did not seem to understand.

"It is a learned doctor from Tübingen," added Magda.

"No it isn't," said the stranger, stepping briskly into the room.

Magda looked abashed. "I beg your pardon, I thought you said ——," began Magda.

"So I did," said the stranger, "but people don't always say what is true. I wanted a name, and one name's as good as another."

Magda did not see the force of the argument though she was silenced, and she went downstairs not half liking the pseudo doctor, though he had promised faithfully to cure Gustav.

It would be difficult to describe the stranger to you, but he was not in the least like a learned doctor; he had no black gown, and there was nothing venerable about him. On the contrary, he had a

remarkably jaunty air, and his clothes were of such gay and varied colours that you might have taken him for a first or second cousin of the Pied Piper of Hamelin. He never mentioned the relationship, so that one can only surmise it, but that he was quite as wonderful a person you will see hereafter. He had sharp little grey eyes, that seemed to pierce through everything, and he looked at Gustav, and twinkled them till the tears ran down his cheeks.

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the jaunty stranger.

Now, the word "Tübingen" was the only one that had penetrated to Gustav's brain, the rest had fallen idly upon his ears. The word inspired him with respect, though the stranger's behaviour was unlike that of the professors with whom he had been acquainted.

The stranger went on laughing. "Ha! ha! ha! —he! he! he!"

Then he paused to take breath, for he was half choked, and the tears were still running down his cheeks; he tried to speak, but his thoughts seemed to overpower him, for he again went off into a long fit of laughter.

"So you think you're the only man in the world?" said the stranger at last.

"Most illustrious!—" began Gustav.

"How lonely you must feel!" interrupted the stranger.

"Most illustrious doctor!—"

"Quite lost!—alone in the world! How truly melancholy!" continued the stranger.

"Most learned professor!—" •

"Yes, I anticipate all you would say. The mind in this case is the matter."

"By no means," answered Gustav, rousing up at the beloved words, "mind is not matter, nor matter mind; the difference——"

"Is no matter."

"Sir!"

"Is perfectly immaterial," rejoined the stranger, chuckling over the play of words: "I put the case thus—If the difference between mind and matter in the present instance be immaterial, it follows that it cannot be material. And if this matter be not material, it must be immaterial; and as you allow mind to be immaterial, matter having been shown to be immaterial, the two are alike; for things equal to the same are equal to one another; therefore, we conclude mind and matter to be both immaterial."

"Sir," said the bewildered student, "I do not follow you. I perceive you belong to some new and strange school."

Here the stranger was seized with another fit of laughter, which threatened to extinguish his eyes altogether, they disappeared for so long a time. But, in spite of this unusual demeanour on the part of a learned professor, Gustav felt strongly attracted towards him.

"I do belong to a new school," said the stranger, "and I am on the look out for pupils—disciples, I should say—after the manner of the ancients, as Aristotle, Zeno, Epicurus, and others."

Gustav listened with attention; a new world of

philosophy might be opening to him, and he ventured to inquire—

“And what system do you follow?”

“My own,” returned the stranger, indulging in another burst of merriment.

And notwithstanding his extraordinary conduct, Gustav determined to follow the new master, and left his home unconcernedly. His mind was too much engrossed to notice his father, mother, or the weeping Magda; he saw no one but the jaunty stranger.

The jaunty stranger nodded to the old Engelmanns, and saying, “Never fear, he’ll be cured in time,” proceeded up the street, regardless of the answering question—

“But when?”

And so the student left Hermanstadt.

If Gustav Engelmann had not been entirely unobservant of common affairs, he would have been struck with the extraordinary rapidity with which he and his companion travelled.

The stranger’s course appeared to be in a straight line, and what was very remarkable, nothing ever seemed to interfere with it. Over mountains, through valleys, across rivers, lakes, streams, where at the exact point they struck for, a bridge, a ford, or a boat awaited them.

At last they came to a mountain, that rose steep and high in their path. Gustav actually roused himself to contemplate the possibility of their having arrived at the seat of learning presided over by his companion; but no—

"We shall make a cut through the earth for a short distance," explained the stranger.

Just at that moment, Gustav's hand came in contact with a flask of Cognac that his mother had, unnoticed by him, thrust into his pocket. He drew it forth, and offered it to his comrade.

The jaunty professor's sharp eyes twinkled and sparkled, but not with laughter.

"What do you take me for? Would I devour my own kith and kin?" he demanded, angrily; and pulling out the cork, he muttered a few incoherent words into the bottle's mouth. Shiver, shiver! with a loud crack, the flask splintered into a thousand pieces, and a whole troop of little hobgoblins sprang into existence—some blue and morose, some green and melancholy, some jovial, and some of a fierce nature, who whirled round and round Gustav, vociferating vehemently.

"A nice thing to be killing my subjects under my very nose! That is a matter I mind very much; but I've put an end to matter," he continued, pointing to the broken fragments, "and set mind free, or spirit I might rather say—triumph of the immaterial over the material—hem?"

And the professor elevated his chin, drew up his eyebrows, and surveyed Gustav with an expression that conveyed, "Pray what do you think of that?"

Now Gustav, as it happened, merely thought that he had met with a metaphysician more capable of dividing his heads than those he had hitherto met with, so he answered—

"I am rejoiced, most learned and illustrious pro-

fessor, to have fallen into the hands of one who can produce such extraordinary results."

"Phew!" was the rejoinder of the professor. "Well," he continued, "since you're not likely to find it out for yourself, I may as well tell you at once that I am the King of the Goblins."

"King of the Goblins?" echoed Gustav.

"King of the Goblins," repeated the king. "You see I am perfectly immaterial—no substance whatever. You may walk through me," said he, coming close up to the student; "you perceive that you do not feel anything. And now, let us proceed."

The mountain opened; straight on they went, for miles and miles. They passed the earth-palace where old Barbarossa is sitting with his beard growing through the table. There he was, on his ivory throne. The student had often heard of him.

"He won't nod or wink at you," said the King of the Goblins, "for you're not a boy; and if you hear him muttering anything about the raven, take no notice. It's not time for him to awake yet."

And they still journeyed on. At length they emerged on the other side of the mountain, and found themselves in a lonely forest, by a little chapel, near which a horse was grazing in the moonlight.

"He's been waiting for his master a hundred years or more," explained the king, "but his master will never come again; he's lying stiff and cold in the coffin he crept into. It's not every one that sees the faithful horse as well as you have done; he looks like a great stone to most people. So you see there is some advantage in travelling with the King of

the Goblins—perhaps more than with a metaphysician.”

But Gustav still thought he was a metaphysician. And there is no reason why a king should not be a metaphysician; the only reason in the present case *against* it being, that the King of the Goblins was not.

“We will take the agricultural districts,” said the goblin monarch; “as well study the material now—we shall have enough of the immaterial afterwards. Travel and learn.”

Now this sentiment had a peripatetic sound to the student’s ears; it savoured of the schools, and therefore pleased him.

“This is the Gräfinn von Knickersteinen’s property. We will go through the farm; they’re all asleep, and I’m rather thirsty. I hope there is a good bowl of cream for me in the dairy.”

But the goblin-king was doomed to disappointment; there were rows of pans with the rich cream rising to the surface, but not a drop set aside for him.

“That lazy, good-for-nothing maid!” exclaimed his majesty, in a rage. “I’ll pinch her black and blue!”

But second thoughts calmed his indignation. “It’s the miserly Gräfinn herself who grudges it to me; but I’ll serve her out!” and with that the goblin-king dipped a slender switch in all the pans, and lo, the cream turned sour!

You may imagine the vexation of the Gräfinn the next morning. How could it have happened,

for there had been no thunder-storm during the night?

But it was getting near dawn; they must hasten on; once only they paused. A poor thrasher had laid himself down to sleep in a barn, so that he might lose no time in getting to his work in the morning. His brow was marked with heavy lines of care, and his poor pinched features told a tale of want.

The goblin-king's hand touched the flail, and chaff and wheat stood in two separate heaps. The goblin-king had wandered through the earth, and he knew the poor man has but few friends to help him.

And in the early morning, when the thrasher opened his eyes and saw his task completed, he knew some kindly spirit had been at work, and he closed his wearied eyes once more, and fell asleep to dream a happy dream.

The journey was ended, the last hill climbed, the goblin-king had brought the student to his dominions. High up among mountain-peaks he held his court. From deep caverns, from crag, ruin, and hollow tree, the motley courtiers came, leaping, jumping, twisting, bounding, tumbling, in no apparent order, and yet never getting in each other's way.

"Immaterial enough," said the monarch to the student. "Yonder are my lords of the Privy Council," and Gustav beheld half-a-dozen grave-looking goblins perched in a row, with their crooked legs dangling, and their tall peaked hats in their hands.

"An important matter, my lords, demands your attention," continued the king, addressing them.

Not only the lords, but the entire goblin population drew near to hear what his majesty had to say.

"I have brought a stranger to our dominions," said the goblin-king; "a somewhat remarkable personage."

Here the goblins clustered round Gustav, peering into his face, and playing a thousand antics—a perfect phantasmagoria. Gustav could, to use the goblin-king's expression, "walk straight through them," and if any divided, it was but to join again. Nevertheless, he could not get rid of them, neither could he see through them, for they were opaque, though unsubstantial.

"Gustav Engelmann," said the king, "believes himself to be the only man in the world."

"Ho! ho! ho!" shouted the goblins, dancing round the student.

"He does not see how he is to know that there are beings of a like existence with himself!"

"Ho! ho! ho!" shouted the goblins.

"And therefore I am going to show him how he may find it out. You must make him feel at home with you, and treat him as one of yourselves."

"Ho! ho! ho!" again roared the goblins, who desired nothing better.

So they surrounded the unfortunate student and dragged him off, though how they accomplished it he never could tell; probably some magnetic influence, or "od" force, for they were a queer set, but it remained inexplicable. It seemed as if some irresistible power impelled and gave him strength to follow them.

"You must do as we do!" said a saucy imp, rolling along like a wheel before Gustav. And, strange to say, the student found himself imitating the saucy imp's evolutions, though awkwardly enough, as you may suppose, to the infinite amusement of the goblins in general.

"Try it again!"

"Don't be so awkward!"

"You'll manage it in time!"

"Practice makes perfect!"

And poor Gustav bounded about, much against his inclination, till he could not have told whether he stood on his head or his heels; and, indeed, he stood as often on the one as on the other, for that is a point of no consequence with goblins.

"Now for a flight round the moon!" said the leader of the sports.

And Gustav, though sinking with fatigue, was hurried along at a fearful pace. Several times he would have stopped, but the goblins, with scourges made of the east wind, lashed him pitilessly on. He could not have supposed it possible for immaterial beings to produce such tangible results; but the goblins had wills of their own, and will carries one forward in a surprising manner. And here the student fell into a speculation as to whether mind and will were one and the same thing; and he could not settle the point, neither can I, and I do not suppose you will care very much about it.

Through the night the wild chase lasted. Gustav moved through the air like lightning. Breathless and exhausted he was borne along, nor until the

approach of the grey morning was he permitted to repose his weary limbs on a hard flinty couch in one of the mountain caverns. Then he found that the pain he had felt was by no means imaginary. His limbs were black and blue with the stinging blows of the goblins.

One night was but the counterpart of another ; but for some time the student was so bewildered that he could not compose his mind for contemplation. Indeed he had scarcely leisure to do so ; for, under pretence of showing their friendliness, or it might be that it was their method of being friendly, the goblins never left him for a moment alone. Rows of grinning goblins watched him to sleep ; rows of grinning goblins greeted him on his awaking.

At length, as use is second nature, he became accustomed to the weird life he was leading, and less annoyed by the pertinacious goblins, and he could now think, even though scores of them were gazing fixedly at him. And as night after night of the fatiguing revels went by he naturally began to feel indignant at the treatment he experienced, and he found an opportunity of upbraiding the goblin-king with having deceived him.

"Not at all," said the monarch, complacently crossing his long twisting legs, and bringing his sharp piercing eyes to bear upon the student. "I'm glad you feel angry. An impression has been made. Lesson the first is taught."

Gustav was now left more to himself ; seldom did the goblins intrude upon his solitude. He lived as he could upon the roots and mountain-berries and

such birds as he could catch. So another space of time passed. One day the goblin-king looked in upon him.

"Going on well I see. Here is a pigeon for you; it's half dead; you can wring its neck and finish it."

And he went away.

Gustav was about to follow the goblin-king's directions, when the fluttering bird nestled into his bosom, as if to shelter from the cold.

"Poor little bird!" said the student, stroking its feathers gently. It seemed to call up some old remembrance.

"It is like one of little Magda's pigeons!" and the student half sighed. He did not kill it, but suffered it to become an inmate of his cave. He took quite an interest in the bird.

The goblin-king paid him another visit.

"You're getting on I see. How are the metaphysics?"

"I've not thought much about them lately; I've been thinking of other things."

"Indeed! Then perhaps you would like to see my magic mirror?"

Gustav did not see what a magic mirror could have to do with metaphysics; however, he followed the king into a subterranean hall, at one end of which was a mirror of polished silver.

The goblin-king motioned to him to sit down, and then waved his wand over the mirror. And Gustav saw the picture of a quaint old garden, with straight walks and beds of early flowers; there were two yew

trees clipped into the forms of a bear and peacock, and Gustav particularly noticed a magnificent display of tulips. A little boy, in a frock that Gustav well remembered, was playing in the garden, and two figures also familiar to him stood watching him.

Then the picture melted away and another appeared. It was of an old courtyard with stabling on one side ; the boy was there, but so much grown that it would have been difficult for a stranger to recognise him. Gustav, however, knew him well, even to the buttons on his jacket. A little girl with yellow hair stood by his side watching the flight of some pigeons.

Again the picture changed. Gustav saw the window of a house he knew quite well ; there were scarlet geraniums on the window-sill, and a girl was there. It was the same girl, almost a woman now, but her honest blue eyes were not changed in the least.

There was yet another picture—a labouring man and his wife counting their hard-earned gains.

“ Gustav needs all this,” said the woman.

“ But your cloak, it is threadbare, mother, and the winter is cold.”

“ Never mind, we must work the harder ; Gustav must not want.”

Then the mirror grew dark. The student sprang up, but the goblin-king signed to him to be silent.

“ You have seen and recognised the past ; you shall have a sketch of the future.”

Gradually the darkness passed away from the mirror, and on its clear surface might be seen the

interior of a wretched hovel. Two aged figures cowered over a miserable fire, whilst a pale, thin, worn woman, still with the clear blue eyes—but such sad eyes now—sat stitching at her work, and as she worked the tears dropped down and almost blinded her.

“What will become of us? No bread! no money! My strength is failing, and who will take care of the old people when I am gone?”

“It will not be; it shall not be! It is not true!” cried Gustav. “The future has not come. Show me the present; oh, for one moment let me see what is happening!”

“My mirror will show no more,” answered the goblin king.

“Cannot the present change the future?”

“It cannot change it!”

Gustav wrung his hands.

“But my mirror has only shown the probable future.”

The student uttered an exclamation of joy.

“Let me go home,” said he, “the present shall atone for the past!”

“That is beyond my power,” returned the goblin-king; “unless some hand from the material world is stretched forth to rescue you, you must for ever remain an inhabitant of these spirit regions.”

Gustav groaned.

“Can you think of any who would wish you back?”

Gustav considered; then he replied firmly—

“Yes; my mother, my father, and even little Magda.”

The goblin's eyes twinkled oddly at the last name.

"Well," said he, "send little Magda her pigeon, and see if she will come to you."

"Magda's pigeon!"

"Magda's pigeon—it was a good thing you did not wring its neck."

But how to send a message? There was but one chance. And Gustav tied a strip of his gay-coloured handkerchief to the pigeon's leg.

"Will she remember it?" said he, as he tossed the carrier-pigeon into the air.

We shall see if she did.

The carrier-pigeon was soon out of sight. It never stopped until it reached the window with the geraniums blooming in their odd flower-pots. But somehow they did not look so flourishing as formerly; the house, too, had a dull look; and as for the house of the old Engelmanns opposite, why that would have made you quite melancholy.

Everything was so quiet, so still, that Magda gave a great start when the pigeon flew into her room. Then she gave a great scream, for she saw the little coloured rag round its leg. She thought the pigeon had been dead long ago; now she knew it had been with Gustav.

"Mother! mother!"

"Magda, how you do frighten one," said her mother; "one would think the house was on fire."

"Look!" said Magda, holding up the bit of Gustav's handkerchief.

"Is the child crazy that she makes such a stir over a dirty bit of rag?"

But Magda answered, "Gustav is coming!"

Now this was certainly leaping to conclusions, and was a much greater stretch of imagination than Magda usually indulged in, for she was not imaginative. However, having arrived at a conclusion she generally held to it.

The pigeon fluttered round her, and she tried to catch it, but when it was seemingly within her grasp it flew on, and so she was insensibly led forward.

Magda seemed to be arriving at conclusions very quickly to-day, for she had not the least doubt but that the bird intended she should follow it. She knew it would guide her to Gustav.

"Tell my good Aunt Engelmann that I have gone to fetch Gustav home," called out Magda to her mother.

On flew the pigeon, and on went Magda after it, and in due time she arrived at the foot of the mountain where the goblin-king held his court. She was not half so long in getting there as Gustav had been; but perhaps the goblin-king had taken him a round-about way, or, which is just as likely, since goblins can do anything they please, the king might have moved the mountain nearer to Hermanstadt.

At any rate, Magda and the pigeon soon arrived there, and had proceeded part of the way up the mountain, when a goblin sentinel appeared and commanded Magda to go back, for she had arrived at the atmospheric belt which was the boundary line of the goblin-king's dominions.

"You cannot proceed without a pass."

And Magda had none. She endeavoured to force her way through the blue haze, but she felt as if she were inhaling sulphur. She could go no further, so she sat down sorrowfully. She thought of a beautiful story that Gustav had told her long ago, of how a poet had lost his wife, and had gone to the gloomy regions of Orcus to search for her, and how he had found her, and might have brought her away if only he could have refrained from looking back to take one glance at her. But, lo, in his delight he forgot everything but his wish to see his loved one's face, and so he lost her, and ever after wandered mournfully through the world, and the burden of his song was, "What shall I do without Eurydice?" So might she lose Gustav.

But Magda was no poet, she was only a steadfast little German maiden, and if there were any ordeal through which she might have to pass in order to rescue Gustav, she knew she could pass through it successfully.

And as if in answer to her thoughts a voice said—

"So you've thought Gustav worth coming to find?"

And Magda, looking up, saw the pseudo-professor in his jaunty attire.

"I'm king of the goblins, Magda," said he, "and you may carry Gustav away with you on condition that you don't speak a word whilst you are in my dominions, not even to Gustav, and take no notice of any questions that may be addressed to you on the way."

Magda joyfully promised. If she had had any

cotton wool she perhaps might have stuffed her ears, after the manner of the Princess Parizade; and yet I think the precaution would have been needless, for Magda, as I said before, was a steadfast German maiden, and had one fixed purpose in her mind at the present moment, from which nothing could divert her until it was accomplished.

She followed the king, and though the goblins danced round her, and put all sorts of tantalizing questions to her, she was imperturbable. Not a word escaped her lips, not even when she saw Gustav, for she remembered that she had come to carry out a work, and not to make speeches. But though Magda made no speech, the goblin-king did, and he fully explained the cause of Magda's silence, and gave the student a few words of advice before he parted with him. It would take too much time to write down all he said, but I will just tell you the remarks with which he concluded.

"When," said he, "you wish to find out whether those who surround you are really beings of a like nature with yourself, don't go poring into metaphysics and learned books to find out; just go to the sorrowing ones and say, 'What ails you?' go to the starving ones and give them food; go to the wretched and try to raise them up; go to the joyous and get infected with their laughter, and to the kindly ones, and bask in the sunshine of their kindliness; and the spark of sympathy that you give forth shall draw an answering spark from them, and shall show you that there are human hearts beating in unison with your own, and you shall learn in one short hour more of

your fellow-beings than all the metaphysics in the world will ever teach you."

It was not a very bad speech for a goblin-king, and I think Gustav profited by it. He endeavoured to grasp the goblin-king's hand, but that was an impossibility, as he was "perfectly immaterial."

"Never mind, I understand you," said the monarch, graciously; "not the slightest matter—quite immaterial—ho! ho! ho!—no matter, no matter!" laughed the goblin-king, and Magda and Gustav passed through the hazy belt, and were out of his dominions for ever.

"You will speak to me now, Magda?" said the student.

But Magda made no answer.

"Are you too much offended at the past?"

But not a word issued from Magda's lips until they were clear of the mountain. Then she answered—

"I thought it best to be on the safe side."

And after that she answered Gustav as many questions as he liked to ask.

As they drew near Hermanstadt, Gustav said—

"I'm going to turn over a new leaf, Magda. I can't quite give up all my old ways, but I am going to try some new ones. What do you say to my becoming a doctor, and curing all the sick folk in the country round? And I will live in the old house and look after my father and mother. But I think I shall not be able to take care of them quite by myself, so will you come and help me, Magda?"

And Magda said "Yes," for long ago Gustav had said she should be his little wife, and as she always

believed everything that Gustav told her, she had believed this also. Indeed this was one of her fixed ideas.

Gustav, I am happy to say, carried out all his good resolutions, and as a token of his gratitude to the goblin-king a bowl of the richest cream was placed for him every night in young Madame Engelmann's dairy.

And every morning a piece of gold was found in the empty bowl, so that Madame Engelmann's dairy was quite as profitable as Dr. Engelmann's patients.

But you must not think that the custom was continued for the sake of the gold pieces; by no means. Although it happened that this grateful action was rewarded, Gustav would have cheerfully performed it, even at a loss to himself, in kindly remembrance of the goblin-king.

"And what became of the carrier-pigeon?" asked Fritz.

"Oh, it was esteemed a highly honourable pigeon to the day of its death," answered Kaspar.

"Did you ever see the student?"

"Oh yes, and he told me some curious goblin stories."

"I wonder did he ever see the Wild Huntsman and his train?" said Peter.

"Why, if he did you know he would not say anything about it."

"True, true; of course not," returned Peter, thoughtfully.

CHAPTER VI.

KLAPPS' STORY.

The Old Clock.

"AGAIN mine is the last story," said Klapps, "but this time I have not had to look over old manuscripts. Fortune pitying me for not having travelled abroad and seen the marvels that are to be seen in the beautiful world, or met with the wondrous adventures that have befallen you, hath gently turned her wheel and thrown a chance narration at my feet, which, I think, cannot be exceeded in interest by any of yours. And as you will wonder in what manner I became possessed of the story I am about to tell you, listen whilst I say a few words in explanation.

"Doubtless you have often admired, as I have done, the rare and exquisitely carved frame-work of our old clock ; the flowers, whose petals are so delicate that one would think no human hand had chiselled them, and the plumage of the birds so elaborately traced that each feather can be distinctly made out, whilst at the base the group of figures is

so perfect, that one might believe they were living beings transfixed in wood, until some spell were wrought out that should set them free.

“I must confess that, in an evening, when the ruddy light of our forge has brought those wonderfully-carved figures into prominence, I have fallen into many a fit of musing as to the history that I felt must belong to them; and, perhaps, in answer to the longing that I experienced, the knowledge for which I thirsted has been revealed to me. Ah, my brothers! strange and invisible bonds draw the seen and unseen nearer to each other than we imagine!

“Last New Year’s Eve I sat up alone to watch the old year out. The silvery chimes of our clock had rung out the quarters till the last quarter struck the midnight hour, and the life of the old year was over. He had carried away the past with him—the joys, the sorrows, the deeds, good and evil, the kindly look and the bitter word were swept away for ever, never to be recalled—never! never!

“The fresh young Year was before me, eager to fulfil the commands of his master, Time. Ah! his step was light, his brow unclouded; but who could tell, ere his course was run, how heavily that step might drag, and how many a deep furrow might be printed on that fair young brow?

“But I weary you with my musings, and yet they scarcely lasted so long as I have been in telling you of them. Whilst I thus mused, a sudden light gleamed round the old clock. I could not tell whence it came, but it enveloped it in a golden mist, which, as it cleared, left a halo lustrous and

yet subdued, causing each bud and blossom, bird, and delicate spray of leaves, each figure in the group that I had before thought perfect, to stand forth in yet more marvellous perfection.

“And four lovely beings twined their fair arms and spread their wings around the old clock, as if, angel like, they guarded some precious treasure.

“And one spoke, and said—

“‘Two hundred years have passed away to-night since the last touch was given to the carving of this old clock, and at the close of each half century it is our duty to relate its history to any mortal whom we find watching. Will you listen to my sisters and myself whilst we perform our task?’

“I feared my voice would sound harsh after those clear tones, so I made no answer, but bowed my head reverently, and the First Quarter began the story :—

“There is no friend like an old friend, and by that I mean one who has twined his joys and sorrows into your heart-strings, and taken yours in return.

“Ruprecht lived to find this out. But I must tell you who Ruprecht was.

“Long, long ago—so long, that it seems like calling up a half-forgotten dream—Reinhard and Ruprecht were neighbours; farther back, Reinhard and Ruprecht were laughter-loving lads together, ever foremost in every village frolic and expedition; and at a still more remote period, two children might be seen throwing pebbles into the mill-stream, or sitting on the green turf sharing cherries with one another. These were Reinhard and Ruprecht;

wherever you saw the one, you would see the other, or, at any rate, know that he was not far off.

"So they grew up.

"Did anything vex Ruprecht, he was consoled by Reinhard; did any piece of good fortune happen to Reinhard, Ruprecht was the first to congratulate him upon it. An affront offered to the one was an affront to both; and a kindness done to the one was amply repaid by the other.

"So they grew up, following the craft of their fathers. They were wood-carvers, and no ordinary ones either. An artistic spirit was infused into their work, a generous emulation possessed them, and the skill of the friendly rivals was the pride of their native village.

"Reinhard had lately married, and the sweet face of his wife, Gunilda, may be traced in many of the angels that adorn his larger works. But Reinhard's marriage had not interfered with Reinhard's friendship; and Gunilda looked upon Ruprecht as a brother, whilst, I think, that Ruprecht admired the little sleeping beauty in the cradle almost as much as Reinhard did himself, or, at least, enough amply to satisfy the mother's heart; and that is saying a great deal.

" 'Call her Elfie,' said Ruprecht, 'for she is more like a fairy than a mortal; she must have stolen those golden ringlets from fairy-land.'

"And the little one opened her calm blue eyes, and fixed them serenely on her mother. Then a great thrill of joy and happiness darted through Gunilda's heart, and she answered—

“ ‘No, she shall be called Angelica; for is she not like an angel?’

“There was a magnificent castle in the neighbourhood in which Reinhard and Ruprecht lived, and they had been executing some carved work for one of the state apartments. It was now completed, and they went to put it up ere the lord of the castle returned.

“As they passed through the beautiful rooms, Ruprecht sighed—

“ ‘It is a fine thing to be a lord, and live in such a palace as this,’ said he.

“ ‘Doubtless, if one is born to it,’ answered Reinhard, ‘but I question if you or I would be half so merry here as we were in my cottage last night over the supper that Gunilda prepared for us. I cannot fancy your singing that droll legend, at which we all laughed so much, in these lofty halls.’

“ ‘Nevertheless,’ said Ruprecht, ‘I should like to have a finely furnished castle, and horses, and attendants, and a full purse. One would want money to begin with. It is a golden key that turns every lock. I wish I were rich.’

“And again Ruprecht heaved a deep sigh.

“ ‘Do you?’ said a shrill voice at his side. ‘Well, come and see me to-morrow, my son, and perhaps, we can arrange matters satisfactorily.’

“Ruprecht looked down, and close at his elbow, which she scarcely reached, stood a wrinkled old woman.

“ ‘And where do you live, good mother?’ asked Ruprecht.

“ ‘ You will find me by the running stream on the forest side,’ answered she ; ‘ you must call me three times, for I am blind, and cannot see you.’

“ ‘ You surely will not go to her,’ said Reinhard as the old woman disappeared.

“ ‘ Why not? She has been known to give good gifts as well as bad ones, and I may be one of the fortunate ones.’

“ And then the two friends went home.

“ The lark did not rise so early the next morning as did Ruprecht. The air was very still, and nothing stirred in the cold grey twilight ; the birds yet nestled in their warm nests, and the insects had not begun their daily hum ; the bee paused on the threshold of the hive, for he knew that the sleeping flowers would give him no honey, so he folded his wings and waited ; the grasshopper changed his mind about a great leap he was just upon the point of taking ; and as for the butterflies they were always idle and had not even thought of awaking. Nature was hushed in so deep a slumber that it seemed as if Death had stretched forth his wings over the earth ; and yet it needed but the flash of a rosy light over the eastern hills to bring back life to the landscape.

“ So everything was very quiet but Ruprecht’s heart, and that was beating fast enough, for he was very anxious to hear what the weird-woman would say to him, and he strode through the tall grass, scattering the dew-drops and crushing the meek daisies, until he reached the running stream, and there he espied the weird-woman sitting in the midst of some rushes. In he splashed amongst

them, but the noise he made did not appear to disturb her, for she gave not the slightest sign of being conscious of his approach.

"He called to her three times. At the third call she looked up.

"'Well, my son.'

"'Good morning, good mother.'

"'So you are ambitious, it seems.'

"'I'm tired of being a wood-carver. I want to go into the world, and take my share of pleasure and happiness in it.'

"'You will probably find the latter more easily by staying where you are.'

"'I don't mind a little trouble, mother, and I am willing to search for what I am sure may be found. Those at the top of the tree must be better off than those upon the ground.'

"'I'm not so sure of that, especially in a high wind; however, that's no affair of mine. What do you want?'

"'Money.'

"'Money, money! that's what all of you come to me for. There might be nothing else of any value in the world.'

"'Money commands everything.'

"'And therefore men must be its slaves. Well, I don't want money myself, so I can give you plenty of it. What's the use of money to a poor blind creature, who sits with her hands before her doing nothing? Give me your talent for wood-carving and I will give you an inexhaustible supply of money.'

"'Willingly; but how am I to get rid of it?'

asked Ruprecht, who already began to despise his craft as by no means consistent with the possessor of countless thousands.

"'Wash your hands in this bowl,' answered the weird-woman.

"And Ruprecht rubbed his hands until the weird-woman was tired, he was so anxious to cleanse them from the slightest imputation of wood-carving.

"'There, that will do,' said she, impatiently; and then she laved her hands in the bowl until Ruprecht in his turn grew impatient, and then she held them out for the sun to dry, which was another very slow process, for the sun was only just rising and had not much power yet. However, the wind dried them.

"Then she drew a knife from her pocket and began cutting away at a piece of wood.

"'Is it a good rose, a beautiful rose?' said she, as she held up the result of her labour.

"Ruprecht uttered an exclamation of surprise. 'Beautiful!' he assented.

"'Yes,' said she, carefully examining it; 'I know it; it is perfect. Here, then, is your money,' and she gave him a purse made of beaver-skin. 'It's not handsome to look at, but you can't empty it.'

"Ruprecht took it joyfully, and turned away. After he had gone a few paces he stopped to look at the weird-woman.

"There she sat, carving away with intense eagerness. She heard him pause, and called after him—

"'Exchange is no robbery. I hope you won't find out that you've got the worst of the bargain!'

"'No fear,' replied Ruprecht, and he hastened on."

“Here the First Quarter left off, and the Second Quarter took up the story:—

“Reinhard and Gunilda were at breakfast. The sun was shining brightly in at the cottage windows, the birds were singing merrily, the scent of the bean-flowers was wafted that way from an adjoining field, and the sweet perfume mingling with the fragrance of the garden blossoms was truly delicious.

“Little Angelica was pulling the long ears of a soft silky spaniel, who, far from resenting such treatment, seemed quite to enjoy it. Soon Ruprecht came in.

“‘I am going away,’ said he.

“‘Going!’ exclaimed Reinhard and Gunilda in a breath.

“And then Ruprecht told of his interview with the weird-woman, and how he had exchanged his talent for gold.

“Reinhard looked grave, and the tears were in Gunilda’s eyes; but Ruprecht was wildly joyful, and spoke of the honours and happiness that he knew awaited him in the great world.

“‘I shall live like a lord,’ said he; ‘in fact I shall be a lord myself, and have a grand house, and be waited on hand and foot, and you and Gunilda must come and live with me and bring little Angelica,’ and he stooped down to the little one, who put her arms round his neck and pulled his dark locks.

“‘Ah, Ruprecht,’ said Gunilda, ‘you will forget us.’

“‘That I shall not,’ answered Ruprecht; ‘I shall never forget my dear old friends, and you will be

proud to see what a great man I shall be. Money can do everything. See!' and he poured some golden coins on the table. 'I shall never want.'

And the coins tumbled out of the purse one upon another till there was such a great heap that you might wonder how it could come out of so small a purse. Of course, no purse but a fairy purse would have held it.

"'There,' said Ruprecht, 'I shall leave that to pay your travelling expenses when you come to see me.'

"But Reinhard answered—

"'No, Ruprecht, put back your gold; I like better to spend what I have earned myself. I cannot take your money.'

"Ruprecht saw that Reinhard meant what he said, so he slipped the money back into the purse, and now it was quite wonderful to see how easily it stowed itself away. But then it was fairy money.

"'Ruprecht,' said Reinhard, 'I doubt whether you will be as happy as you have been here. You may take pleasure for a season in the novelty of your new life, but the time will perhaps come when you will long for the sight of old faces, and wish yourself once more a simple wood-carver.

"Ruprecht laughed contemptuously.

"'I've a brave heart that will bear me up.'

"'And a kind one that will not bear slights,' added Gunilda. 'Oh, Ruprecht! Ruprecht! stay with us!' and she burst into tears.

"'A doleful kind of congratulation you and Reinhard give me!' returned Ruprecht, angrily; 'but as

my mind's made up, I may as well say good-bye, and go,' and he turned towards the door.

"Reinhard put his hand on his shoulder. 'Stay, Ruprecht, let us part friends; we may never look upon each other's face again.'

"Then Ruprecht gave his hand to Reinhard, and the two men gazed steadfastly into each other's eyes, each reading there the long, long past, and taking a kindly farewell, but they spoke no word. Each wrung the other's hand in silence, and understood that it was with them now as it had been with them as little children after a hasty word had blown by.

"Gunilda clasped Ruprecht's extended hand, and held up the little Angelica for him to kiss. Thus he went away.

"Ruprecht felt sad for awhile after leaving the cottage; but his spirits rose as he advanced on his journey. At the first large town that he came to he began to make use of his newly-acquired wealth. He went to the best inn, ordered the best rooms, and sent for the best tailor, who soon supplied him with an extensive wardrobe.

"'Who can he be?' pondered the tailor; 'he orders like a lord, and pays like a ——' but here the tailor's imagination totally failed him for a comparison. Such a ready-money customer it had never been his lot to meet with.

"Ruprecht remained for some time at the inn. He ordered a handsome carriage, and luxuries of every kind.

"'I am going to travel,' said he to the landlord. 'I want everything as comfortable as possible. Spare

no expense, but see to it for me, and order everything that is necessary.'

"And the landlord did see to it, and not only ordered what was necessary, but a good deal that was unnecessary! But what cared Ruprecht? nothing could make a hole in his purse!

"So Ruprecht was satisfied, and the landlord was satisfied, and the tradesmen were satisfied—everyone was satisfied, or at least, as satisfied as people generally are. Perhaps it occurred to one or two of them afterwards that they might as well have made a little more money when they had an opportunity, but this was from no just cause of complaint on their part.

"Ruprecht travelled from one place to another until he came to a wonderfully stately-looking city on the banks of a broad river. It was truly a city of palaces, and I doubt if anything more magnificent could be imagined. But the most splendid mansion in the city was uninhabited. No one was wealthy enough to live in it.

"'Just suitable for me,' thought Ruprecht; and forthwith he purchased the mansion.

"Then he had it fitted up. But it would weary you to hear of all its costly contents. And everyone paid court to the Baron von Lindenstein, for that was the name Ruprecht went by.

"Ruprecht was enchanted. This was truly pleasure! This was truly living! The days rolled by on golden wheels. Money! money! money! greatest blessing to man! What is there that money cannot give?

“And thus his life stole on ; nobles flocked to his entertainments ; everywhere was he received with obsequious attention ; even the king treated him with unwonted affability.

“Yet in the midst of all his greatness Ruprecht felt alone. There was no familiar friend with whom he might freely converse ; no one to whom he could speak of old days, or with whom he might laugh over old jests. The past must be truly past with the Baron von Lindenstein. It would not do to let these grandees know that he was but a wood-carver !—that must for ever remain a secret.

“And to guard this secret became the business of his life, and it was surprising how much thought and trouble it cost him to ward off too curious inquiries, and to divert people’s speculations into channels running in quite a wrong direction.

“Perhaps if he had spared himself all this trouble, and had boldly said, ‘My lords, I was a wood-carver ; art-life made me a gentleman, and fortune a rich man ; I am not ashamed of my birth, and I pray you to receive me as becomes my wealth and bearing,’ he might have been none the worse off, for human nature is human nature in nobles as well as simple folk, and honest truth will win its way to every heart.

“But he did not do this ; and so he lived on, a cold grand life—one that was beginning to weigh him down with its stately splendour, and yet which he could not bring himself to renounce.

“And so he lived. Had he forgotten Reinhard

and Gunilda? Not quite; he would go and see them some day; but as for their coming to see him, the idea was absurd! What would Reinhard do at court? and even Gunilda? True, he had seen no ladies at court fairer than Gunilda, but then Gunilda had not at all the air of a court-lady!

"Oddly enough, the king had a passion for carved work.

" 'I have offered a prize,' said he, 'for a clock in the most beautiful carved frame that can be devised. The order has gone abroad, and from all parts of the world I expect to have competitors.'

"Ruprecht felt vexed, he scarcely knew why. Would Reinhard hear of it? Once upon a time Ruprecht and Reinhard would have wrought at the same work together. And Ruprecht hoped that Reinhard was too far off to hear of the king's offer.

"Ah! Reinhard was lying on his bed with a broken arm; and Gunilda, pale and sad, was watching by him.

"And the weird-woman was carving beautiful flowers, and throwing them into the water as fast as they were finished.

" 'For what,' said she, 'is the use of work that one cannot see?'

"Then the Third Quarter went on:—

"Reinhard lay helpless on his bed, his broken arm bandaged up. His eye glanced sadly upon his wife and child, and he looked despondingly at some beautiful pieces of half-finished carving.

"Then he sighed.

" 'Ah, Gunilda! I think I should have stood a fair chance of success.'

"Gunilda tried to encourage him.

" 'There are yet six months,' said she, 'and your arm may be well before two have passed away.'

" 'Two months! that is long. How are you to live during that time? Besides, it would take six months' constant work to carry out my design, and I fear my stiffened joints will never do their work again.'

" 'It is truly beautiful!' said Gunilda, examining the portions of the clock. 'Ah, if Ruprecht were but here!'

"And, thinking of Ruprecht, another thought darted into Gunilda's mind. She said nothing, but busied herself with their evening meal; and then leaving little Angelica, now a thoughtful child, five years old, to watch by Reinhard during her absence, she left the cottage.

"Whither were her steps wending? Over the fields, and past the wood, and to the rush-crowned stream, where once Ruprecht had hastened with a heart beating not more wildly than did Gunilda's at this present moment.

"The weird-woman was carving wondrous flowers; but they did not seem to please her, for she threw them discontentedly away.

"Gunilda paused.

" 'Good mother,' said she, and her voice, sweet and low, reached the weird-woman's ear.

" 'Reinhard's wife?' said she.

“‘Yes, good mother; Reinhard is ill.’

“‘I know it. What do you want?’

“‘Good mother, you can bestow wonderful gifts. He would finish his clock. Can you restore to him the use of his arm?’

“‘Ay, and more than that; I can bestow fresh cunning on his hand, so that his workmanship shall be unsurpassed.’

“Gunilda clasped her hands with joy.

“‘But I must be paid,’ continued the weird-woman. ‘What will you give me in return?’

“‘What have I?’ asked Gunilda.

“‘The price is great; are you inclined to pay it—for your husband—for your child?’

“‘I am willing.’

“Then the weird-woman answered—

“‘I have sat here, sightless, many and many a long day. Give me your sight, and I will restore your husband’s skill.’

“Gunilda started. ‘Is there no other way?’

“‘None!’ answered the weird-woman. ‘I’m tired of being blind, and I have determined to grant no boon except in exchange for sight. It’s weary work, sitting day after day in the dark, and never seeing the beautiful things that every one is praising; weary enough, I can tell you.’

“‘Weary indeed!’ echoed Gunilda.

“‘People are fond enough of giving me what they don’t care about, in exchange for what they value,’ said the weird-woman, ‘and now I shall see if they’ll be so ready to part with what they prize. Come, make up your mind, for I’m going to my sister’s, far

down under the waters. It's the only chance for your husband and your child.'

"'One moment! oh, one moment!' gasped Gunilda. Then she added, 'Take it!'

"'Look at this piece of crystal,' said the weird-woman; and Gunilda fixed her eyes upon it.

"As she gazed the light seemed to fade from around her; darker and darker grew the air. Was it night coming on.

"Only the night of blindness.

"'Is it quite dark?' asked the weird-woman, reaching out her hand for the piece of crystal.

"'Quite dark,' answered Gunilda, faintly.

"Then the weird-woman pressed the crystal to her sightless orbs—

"'The night is vanishing, the morning dawns. Light! light!—the world is opened out before me! —I see! I see!'

"Gunilda sank down.

"'Nay, don't take it to heart so much,' said the weird-woman, 'it has not spoiled your beauty in the least, only you'll never be able to see it in the glass again. But you'll have your husband to tell you of it, and that will be as good as seeing it yourself.'

"Then Gunilda awoke to the extent of her sacrifice.

"'Oh! Reinhard, Reinhard!' she shrieked, 'and shall I never see thee more? and my Angelica, my little child, never, never? If I could take one more look I should be satisfied. Lend me my sight, good mother—lend it, I pray, for one short hour, for one more look—just one look more!'

"But Gunilda pleaded in vain.

" 'The gift is too good a gift to lose for one moment! Go home, go home, and take comfort in your husband's welfare.'

"So Gunilda wandered home. Light dancing footsteps came forth to meet her, and a gay song saluted her ears.

" 'A miracle!—a miracle!' said Reinhard, joyfully clasping her in his arms; 'see, already the flowers grow beneath my touch! the birds seem almost to move their wings! Is it not wondrous? Scarce had you been gone an hour, ere the bandage fell from my arm, and new life was infused into me!'

"Gunilda raised her sightless eyes to his—

" 'Reinhard, I am blind!'

"Quick as a flash of lightning the truth revealed itself to Reinhard. Long, long he held Gunilda to his heart.

" 'My wife! my wife!' at length he said, 'this should not have been!'

"But Gunilda spoke cheerfully, and consoled him with the hope that sometime she might regain her sight.

" 'Angelica will be my eyes till then.'

"And the thoughtful little face looked grave, and Angelica clasped still tighter her mother's hand.

"And Reinhard's work proceeded. He had intended carving a group of emblematic figures at the base, but his hand, as if by magic, traced instead the last interview with Ruprecht. And there stood forth the rarely-chiselled figures; one could almost

fancy they breathed, so life-like were they in their marvellous beauty.

"But poverty had been long creeping in at the cottage. The prize worked for was magnificent, but might it not come too late—too late!"

"The Last Quarter advanced:—

"But a few words, and the story will be ended.

"Too late, alas!—too late! Poverty brought want and hunger in its train. The scanty meals were measured out with care. The father and mother denied themselves, that the little one might not feel the cruel pangs of hunger.

"Reinhard grew weaker and weaker, but still he wrought with undiminished zeal.

"Hope!—hope! The work is perfect.

"And Gunilda's finger, with quickened sense, passed over it.

"'I can almost see it! How like Ruprecht! Ah! where is Ruprecht now?'

"But a few more touches and the clock is finished. Reinhard moves back a step to take a view of it, and a smile of triumph lights up his face. Then a heavy film gathers over his eyes; he has taken his last look, and, with the completion of his work, the worker's life is ended.

"'Speak, Reinhard, speak!' cried Gunilda.

"But Reinhard will never speak again. Gunilda's head falls on her husband's breast, and the little Angelica is an orphan.

"There, at the foot of the wood-carver's masterpiece, he and his wife lie sleeping the sleep of

death! A little figure, like an angel, is weeping over them. Ah! where is Ruprecht now?

* * * * *

"Too late!—though Ruprecht's foot is at the door. Too late!—though Ruprecht's hand is on the latch. The kiss of friendship cannot unseal those cold lips, nor the out-poured words of love stir one pulse in those silent hearts.

"What mysterious influence has drawn Ruprecht hither! Why rose that sudden yearning in his heart to see the home of his childhood—to grasp once more the hand of his old friend; once more to open heart to heart, as he had not done since he and Reinhard parted. For though the world bowed at his feet, still Ruprecht felt he was a lonely man.

"His friend—his dear old friend! And was it thus they met?

"'Hush! little one, Ruprecht will be a father to thee!' And the little Angelica was folded in Ruprecht's arms.

* * * * *

"The clock never obtained the offered guerdon of the king, for, to Ruprecht and Angelica, it was a priceless treasure."

"As the last words were spoken, the first hour struck, the figures faded from before my sight, and I was left in darkness, for the fire of our forge had died out."

The little brothers were silent for a few moments; then Peter said—

“ But is not this a somewhat sorrowful story to conclude with? Will it not grieve our darling Lilien?”

Then Klapps answered, as he turned the key of the casket—

“ Our casket is but an emblem of life, containing both joy and sorrow. The one would scarce be perfect without the other, and deeper, purer joy is born of sorrow than of all the merriment upon the earth.”

THE END.

KARL AND THE SIX LITTLE DWARFS.

From the "EXAMINER," December 27th.

"Miss Goddard lays her scene in Germany, and may have caught some inspiration from the Germans, who excel greatly in this manner of writing. However that may be, we have here the tale of little Karl, the guest, after old Lisbeth's death, in the cave of the six dwarfs, who 'are not such bad little fellows, though old Lisbeth had not much opinion of us,' and of the little girl with long golden hair, Lilien, who was another guest in the cave, and turned out to be a Princess; of Lilien's being stolen from her little friends and Karl by a witch; of the search made for her by the dwarfs; of their equipment of Karl as a Knight of the Silver Armour; of his finding of the Princess; his fight in the tournament with Grimstein, the witch's son, and so forth—all honest and bright child romance. The little dwarfs come to court when Karl marries the Princess, and when they go home to their cave again the good little fellows, being moped, tell stories to each other out of their own past adventures met with when in search of Lilien. And the stories are all really stories, briskly told in the naive, genial, fanciful way that raises happy smiles in the young listener, suggesting—except, perhaps, in the short piece about the 'River,' which is too simply a sentimental allegory—throughout lively and bright pictures to the fancy, seldom for one minute letting the incident sink under the stream of words. The little dwarfs, who are themselves pleasantly sketched, mean to cheer themselves, now that they have lost their friendly children, with more story-telling. We shall look for their tales next Christmas, and welcome heartily in Miss Julia Goddard a writer who has the right sort of imagination for a fairy tale, and from whom we may hope often to get a little story-book as good as this of *Karl and the Six Little Dwarfs*."

From the "ATHENÆUM," February 21st, 1863.

"*Karl and the Six Little Dwarfs*, by Julia Goddard (Bell and Daldy). The six tales for children contained in this pretty gift-book are greatly superior to the ordinary run of nursery literature. The one we most like is the last—'An Episode in the Life of Andreas Toffel.' Little readers will approve the moral of the story, and resolve not to imitate the worldly-minded shoemaker who threw off his 'true-love' because she remained poor when he suddenly became rich."



